
DATE RAPE: SOCIAL PERCEPTION OF RAPE MYTHS AND STEREOTYPES

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ABSTRACT

Gavey (1992) identified a reluctance for people to define forced sexual intercourse that occurs within the context of a date or between couples who are romantically linked, as rape. Date rape from a socio-cultural perspective is seen as an extreme act on a continuum of socially accepted aggressive sexual behaviour. One of the reasons for this is the many myths that exist about rape which act to blame survivors of rape for their own victimisation, consistent with Lerner's (1980) "just-world" view of negative life events. In order to investigate social perception of date rape, seventy male and female students from the University of Canterbury were asked to evaluate a hypothetical dating scenario that described either a forced or consenting sex experience. As an extension to the rape perception literature, two cognitive manipulations previously associated with activation of stereotypes were included in the study design. Participants were assigned to one of four experimental groups; low cognitive load, high cognitive load (memory load), high affective load (positive mood manipulation), and control (consenting sex scenario). Results indicated men and women in the present sample did not differ in their adherence to rape myths, and showed less rape supportive beliefs than the literature review predicted. Males gave higher ratings that the female encouraged the sexual incident the more they identified with the male actor, consistent with Lerner's just world theory. Females' identification with the female actor were not influenced by the type of scenario presented (date rape or consenting sex). Participants in the high cognitive load and high affective load conditions did not show greater rape myth acceptance and more rape supportive beliefs than participants in the low cognitive load in support of the hypotheses. The results are considered within a social-cognitive framework of sexual offending.

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

There is widespread misunderstanding about the adversity of rape and its far reaching consequences. There is a tendency for the impact of rape to be minimised, and trivialised in society today, particularly for victims raped by their dating partners (Anderson, Cooper, & Okamura, 1997; Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987; Koss, Dinero, Seibel, & Cox, 1988; Shotland & Goodstein, 1983). One of the most common myths about rape, is that it is usually committed by depraved or violent individuals who seek out vulnerable women, and attack them by surprise (Burt, 1991; Weis & Borges, 1973). The reality of the situation is however, quite different. According to New Zealand Rape Crisis (1996), women are four times more likely to be raped by a person known to them than by a stranger. New Zealand Rape Crisis research indicated that of all the rape victims who contacted their centres between 1993 and 1995, 91 percent of women knew their attacker (Stirling, 1996). This figure is similar to that identified by extensive research undertaken on date rape in the United States (Koss, 1988).

Sawyer, Desmond, and Lucke (1993, p.11), recently defined date rape as "an interaction that begins between people at a social event or gathering and ends with one participant forcing and / or coercing the other to participate in sexual activity". This includes behaviours such as ignoring protests indicating that intimacy is not mutual, threatening negative consequences or use of force, or using force to obtain sexual intimacy (Berkowitz, 1992). For the purpose of the present study, this definition of the term "date rape" is used.

The fact is, date rape is a serious social problem, the true extent of which is largely unknown. There is a reluctance for people to define as rape forced sexual intercourse that occurs on a date or between couples

who are romantically linked (Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987). One of the reasons for this is the many myths that exist about rape that will be examined in detail in a later section. Contributing also to the high incidence of unreported and unacknowledged rapes are elements of the dating situation. Dating is the socially approved initial phase of the courtship and marriage ritual. One of the most difficult problems for many women victims who have been sexually assaulted by their partner, probably a person with whom they have placed their trust, is acknowledging a sexual assault, including forced sex by their date, as any kind of offence. This is partly due to the ambiguity of the dating situation. As Weis & Borges (1973, p.89) put it, "The dating system can easily lead to rape. It places actors with highly socialised but different expectations into a socially approved, ambiguous situation in which there is maximum privacy." This is one of the reasons date rape is one of the most unreported types of rape and therefore not reflected by official crime statistics (Koss, 1985; Koss et al., 1988; Shapcott, 1988).

A recent meta-analysis which quantitatively integrated sixty studies from the victim blame literature, reported the finding that other variables such as the degree of sexual provocativeness in demeanour and dress displayed by the victim, and prior acquaintance with an attacker moderated observers' attributions of blame for rape (Whatley, 1996). Specifically, it was shown that a rape victim dressed in more revealing clothing and perceived by observers as being of 'questionable' moral character was more likely to be held accountable for rape than a female dressed more modestly and of good character. Additionally, findings supported the tendency for perceivers to attribute more responsibility towards the female victims for rape where the victim previously knew her attacker than for a stranger rape situation. The finding that people are less likely to judge a forced sex situation as rape the closer the relationship between the victim and offender has received considerable support in the literature (Klemmack

& Klemmack, 1976; Oros, Leonard, & Koss, 1980), although a few investigators have found the opposite effect (Smith, Keating, Hester, & Mitchell, 1976), or no differences (Tetreault & Barnett, 1987). The majority of studies investigating attribution of responsibility for rape have used hypothetical rape scenarios as the primary stimulus, and it is hypothesised that the differences in the content of the scenarios across studies are likely causes of the diversity of results (Whatley, 1996). However, this research highlights the importance of individual perception of a victim's behaviour and reputation in appraising an experimental rape scenario, which also may differ from the perception of actual victims who have experienced sexual violence (Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987). Considering the importance of variables which may affect peoples' judgements of rape, the present study proposes to investigate whether people will perceive a hypothetical dating encounter that leads to forced sex as a rape situation where the couple are romantically involved.

Before considering prevalence rates of date and / or acquaintance rape, it is necessary to point out to the reader that the focus of the current study is date rape as it refers to the specific and narrower definition of date rape; that is, couples who are seeing each other socially, with a romantic interest in each other. There has been criticism in the literature directed at the way in which the terms 'date rape', and 'acquaintance rape' which define different populations have been loosely applied (Sawyer et al., 1993). Acquaintance rape by definition encompasses a much broader scale of victims and offenders, from those who may know one another in the briefest sense, to married couples. While the present study does consider rape mythology in a general sense, the main stimulus involved in the study was a scenario describing a couple who would be considered to be typical of most dating couples. Therefore, the term 'date rape' referred to in this study pertains to couples who are seeing each other socially. Also, it should be pointed out that the primary focus of this study of date rape

refers to heterosexual dating couples, where all victims are female and offenders male, because in the vast majority of rapes, it is a male who commits the act against a female victim (Cox & Irwin, 1989). Although the author acknowledges incidents of rape occurring between homosexual couples (Shapcott, 1988), it is beyond the scope of this study.

PREVALENCE

A majority of the research on the prevalence of rape and other forms of sexual aggression largely involve students from American college populations. Early research conducted in the United States by Kanin and colleagues reported 20 - 25 percent of college women experienced attempts at intercourse against their will by their boyfriends, which resulted in the woman pleading, crying, fighting, and screaming (Kanin, 1957; Kirkpatrick & Kanin, 1957). Additionally, 26 percent of college men admitted to using force to obtain sexual intercourse that caused overt distress in the woman.

There is very little data on the prevalence of sexual victimisation conducted in New Zealand. However, Gavey (1991), conducted a survey of Auckland University students to investigate the extent of sexual victimisation experienced by New Zealand women. She found that 52 percent of a sample of 347 women had experienced unwanted sexual contact, with 25 percent either having been raped or having experienced an attempt at rape. It was further reported by nearly two-thirds of this sample of women, that the sexual aggression they had experienced occurred within typical heterosexual relationships with boyfriends, lovers, husbands, and de facto partners. Consistent with the findings reported in this study, the New Zealand National Crime Survey (1997) reported that 26 percent of women from a random sample of 5000 New Zealand

households had experienced sexual violence against their will which included attempts of the following acts: penetration of the vagina or anus with objects other than a penis; oral and anal sex; and sexual intercourse.

Patton and Mannison (1995) showed similar results from their survey of sexual victimisation among a university student sample in Australia. The figure that one in four women had either experienced rape or attempted rape seems high, yet almost identical figures were obtained from a research team led by Koss across 32 college campuses in the United States using the same methodological instrument as used by Gavey (1991), and Patton and Mannison (1995), the Sexual Experiences Survey, or SES (Koss & Oros, 1982; Koss & Gidycz, 1985; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987). The results indicated that 27.5 percent of college women reported experiencing rape or attempted rape since the age of 14. Overall, 54 percent of college women claimed experiencing some form of sexual aggression from being verbally pressured into engaging in sexual contact not involving intercourse, to being physically forced to engage in intercourse, or other sex acts such as anal and oral sex, or penetration by objects other than a penis.

Rapaport and Burkhart (1984) reported that 15 percent of men from a college sample admitted to obtaining sexual intercourse from their dating partners against their will. At another large American University, 20 percent of the women interviewed reported that their boyfriend had physically forced them to have sexual intercourse on a date. At yet another, 27 percent of the women respondents claimed that they had experienced either physical or psychological pressure to comply with their partner's desire to engage in sexual intercourse against their will (Sawyer et al., 1993).

Koss (1983), reported approximately 13 percent of a college sample of women had experienced forced sexual intercourse that was unwanted, that involved physical force or threat of harm. Furthermore, the majority of these rape victims already knew their assailant and were romantically connected, and 43 percent did not acknowledge the experience as rape, therefore they did not perceive themselves as rape victims.

Many researchers have questioned the validity of self report survey instruments, particularly for sexual behaviour experiences. However, Koss and Gidycz (1985), have investigated the accuracy of self reports on the SES, and report a high correlation between a woman's self reported victimisation compared with her responses in a one-to-one interview several months later (Koss et al., 1987). Although both measures are based on self-reports, they show high consistency across time. However, caution needs to be exercised when interpreting results from studies based on university student samples due to unknown generalisability to the wider population. Additionally, most students fall into the high risk age group for date rape (Koss et al., 1987; New Zealand Rape Crisis, 1996).

There is no specific prevalence data collected on "date rape". However, the research reviewed indicates that many men are involved in a wide spectrum of sexually assaultive and coercive behaviour including forced intercourse (Rapaport & Burkhart, 1984). The research also suggests that many women who experience rape by their dating partners, as many as one in eight US college women as estimated by Koss et al., (1987), in one of the most often cited studies in the United States, do not perceive or acknowledge their experience as rape, thus making it difficult to obtain a true prevalence rate for date rape, as well as misrepresenting the scope and nature of problems associated with unacknowledged date rape victims.

Social perception of rape

A New Zealand survey investigated male 'macho' attitudes towards rugby, drinking, and womanising and found that 35 percent of males in their study indicated they would continue their sexual advances even if it was unwanted by their partner (Hadley, Tremain, & Sheddan, 1996). However, admitting to the likelihood of 'continuing with unwanted sexual advances' might have been perceived differently to admitting the likelihood of raping a non-consenting partner due to the negative social perception of rape and rapists. One of the principal goals of this study is to determine whether having sexual intercourse against a woman's will within a dating situation is identified as rape by a New Zealand University student sample.

Muehlenhard and Linton's (1987) study of women who had experienced sexual assault on a date reported that the most common method that men used to obtain non-consensual sex was just going ahead and doing it anyway. This is similar to the finding of Rapaport and Burkhart (1984) who reported that the most frequent coercive strategy used by men was to disregard their partner's protests indicating that sexual intimacy was not mutual.

Part of the difficulty in labelling forced sex as rape between couples who become physically intimate with each other, is the tendency for men and women to misperceive forced sex as part of the seduction process. A man may interpret his partner's willingness to engage in other forms of sexual activity such as kissing or fondling, as a pre-cursor to sex, whereas the female may not necessarily be prepared to advance to intercourse (Russell, 1975). The dating scenario which was used in the present study described a couple engaged in intimate behaviour which initially was mutual, but was later resisted by the female before intercourse occurred. According to Koss et al., (1988) this scenario within

the context of normal dating behaviour where the female initially consented to and encouraged the sexual behaviour will diminish the likelihood the situation will be perceived as rape.

Many women are prepared to increase levels of physical intimacy along with increasing levels of emotional commitment from men, whereas men place a higher value on having sex before they are willing to commit themselves emotionally (Burkhart & Stanton, 1988). Indeed, many men will often ask a woman out after they have decided that they'd like to have sex with her, whereas women may view the invitation as an opportunity to get to know the man better (New Zealand Rape Crisis, 1996). Many men also initiate sexual activity expecting resistance from their partner, because they have been socialised to believe women are inclined to initially resist before eventually submitting (Muehlenhard & Hollabaugh, 1988; Weis & Borges, 1973). Although a woman may view a man who ignores her protests and forces himself upon her very negatively, she is less likely to perceive him as a rapist the more she adheres to the myth that rapists are violent, mentally disturbed individuals who skulk around at night waiting for their next victim (Burt, 1991; Shapcott, 1988; Shotland & Goodstein, 1983). She may falsely believe that rape does not happen on dates, or that her partner will stop whenever she requests it (Burkhart & Stanton, 1988). As will be discussed in a later section, societal norms governing sex role expectancies and how they relate to one another leads to miscommunication towards one another's sexual intentions and misattribution of responsibility for date rape.

STRANGER VERSUS ACQUAINTANCE RAPE

It is difficult for a woman to perceive the potential for physical intimacy with a boyfriend to progress to rape compared with a sudden attack from a complete stranger. A stranger who intends to rape is usually prepared, and is more overtly threatening. Many rapists produce a weapon to ensure submission of a victim which is the image of a stereotypical rapist many people readily accept. However, certain elements of a typical stranger rape experience are absent compared with a date rape situation, such as the level of violence, and this disparity makes forced sex in a dating context difficult to interpret as real rape (Koss et al., 1988; Shapcott, 1988).

In a comparative study of victims who had been raped by either strangers or acquaintances, ranging from non-romantic acquaintances to spouses and other family members, stranger rape was more likely to have been acknowledged by the victim as rape and reported to other persons. While 55 percent of women assaulted by strangers considered their experience rape, only 23.1 percent of women assaulted by someone they knew did so. Few women raped by an acquaintance, boyfriend, husband or family member sought crisis services or officially reported their assault. Data analysis was calculated on respondents who indicated they had told someone about the assault, while those who indicated they hadn't told anyone were not asked any further questions about reporting or seeking help. When calculated for the entire sample, more victims of stranger rape had sought crisis services (19.2 percent) compared with 1.7 percent of non-stranger rape victims. Additionally, 21.2 percent of stranger rape victims informed the police, compared with 1.7 percent of victims raped by an acquaintance, husband or family member. None of the victims of rape by a steady date informed the police (Koss, Dinero, Seibel, & Cox, 1988).

Many sexually assaulted women did not perceive they had been victims of any kind of crime including 29.4 percent of women raped by strangers compared with 62 percent of women raped by someone they knew. Specifically, 73.0 percent of women raped by casual dates and 71.2 percent of women raped by steady dates did not view their sexual assaults as any kind of crime.

Date rape is far less likely to be reported than stranger rape, yet Koss et al., (1988) found that it is as psychologically damaging to the victim as an assault by a stranger. No significant differences were found between victims of stranger rape and victims of acquaintance rape in the levels of psychological symptoms such as depression, anxiety, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction. Both groups had elevated scores on the standardised psychological scales in comparison with population norms. Comparisons drawn between the acquaintance rape victims showed that women raped by their husbands or relatives compared with women raped by non-romantic acquaintance and casual dates viewed themselves as less responsible for being assaulted and gave higher ratings of anger and depression in response to the offender's aggression. This finding may be related to the fact that women raped by their spouse or a relative reported higher levels of violence including hitting, slapping, choking, and beating than any other group of acquaintance rape victims. Women may view the coupling of a higher level of violence with sexual aggression as being more similar to stranger rapes. No differences were found in the level of reported violence by victims of stranger rape, and victims raped by their husbands in this study, whereas experiences of rape by dating partners were rated less violent by victims. Date or acquaintance rape that is coupled with high levels of violence may be perceived in a similar fashion to stranger rape, providing support for the research reviewed above with regards to recognising the situation as rape, rather than elements of the customary dating and seduction ritual. Furthermore,

women raped by their husbands or family members reported lower ratings of relationship satisfaction and quality than the other acquaintance rape victims (Koss et al., 1988). In order to gauge whether participants in the present study would perceive a non-violent forced sex scenario as rape, the story described a non-violent coerced sex situation where the male ignored the protests of the female rather than resorting to physical violence to achieve intercourse.

The results presented above also support the notion that the element of violence involved in either date or stranger rape is not the only source of trauma experienced by victims post-rape. However, sources of emotional pain may vary considerably in terms of the degree of the prior relationship shared with the perpetrator. Many victims may find distancing themselves from a personally humiliating and degrading assault from the person they cherished and trusted very traumatic and painful to accept, as it is harder to de-personalise an attack from a loved one compared with a complete stranger (Weis & Borges 1973). This notion supports the findings reported by Koss et al., (1988) that the greater the personal investment in the relationship, the greater the psychological impact on the victim.

REPORTING RAPE

Since the 1970's, the women's movement has done much to highlight new perspectives on rape, which has led to a flourishing literature of research and social analysis of rape, and the widespread development of support services for women who are victims of rape (Haines & Abbott, 1983; Shapcott, 1988). In 1978, the Federal Bureau of Investigation estimated that only ten percent of rape victims in America ever made a formal complaint to the police, as did Koss (1985), who suggested that

as few as ten percent of rapes occurring may be reported to the law enforcement authorities in the United States. In Australia, twenty-five percent of survivors of rape and sexual assault reported these crimes according to a national Victim Crime Survey (1983). Twenty-three percent of New Zealand rape victims indicated in a 1983 survey they had reported the attack to the police (Shapcott, 1988).

Research conducted in New Zealand on the prevalence of reported sexual attacks suggests that between 10 - 25 percent is within reasonable limits given the inherent difficulties encountered in research of this nature. This range is also consistent with generally accepted rates reported in overseas research (Abigail, 1996; Stone, Barrington, & Bevan, 1983).

Although scepticism for the validity and accuracy of these surveys has been expressed and obtaining a true rate is exceedingly difficult due to methodological differences and the nature of the surveys which are based on retrospective self reports, there are clearly large numbers of women who do not report their experiences of rape and sexual assault to the police as evidenced by the number of victims who have contacted women's centres for support (Haines & Abbott, 1983; Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987; Shapcott, 1988; Wilson, 1978). While many victims of date rape may be unaware of their status as a victim of a serious and violent crime, others who do acknowledge their experience as rape and seek further support or advice may not feel safe or comfortable in reporting to the authorities (Wilson, 1978). The behaviour of the victim before, during, and after the rape is often judged according to societal values which relate closely to widely shared attitudes towards traditional sex roles. Research has shown that people make judgements of victim accountability for an assault based on these values (Stone et al., 1983). These values are embedded in the social myths surrounding rape which lay people,

police, and judges are all susceptible to (Field, 1978), and are examined in detail in the following section.

RAPE MYTHS AND STEREOTYPES

Theoretical perspectives of victim blame

In 1978, Burt reported on her investigations of attitudes towards rape and sexual assault from a social psychological and feminist perspective. She argued that there exists in our Western culture, many beliefs which support blaming rape survivors for their own victimisation. These also serve to deny and minimise the violent, serious nature of rape, and also maintains the belief that the victim wanted and enjoyed being raped. These principles, in Burt's opinion, are embedded in a complex set of attitudes which reinforce the patriarchal world view. The logic behind blaming women for rapes perpetrated against them is similar to the "just world" hypothesis, in which observers justify negative incidents by attributing fault to the victim (Burt, 1980; Lerner, 1980). There are obvious benefits for women who also believe that only certain types of women are raped, such as those who dress and act seductively. In turn, where women consider they do not conduct themselves this way, this enhances their feelings of security in that these attacks are never likely to be committed against them. Thus, by not acknowledging or supporting sexual assault victims, this serves to protect women from recognising their own vulnerability to being attacked in a similar fashion. A world in which bad things can happen to anyone irrespective of who they are or how they live only serves to enhance feelings of powerlessness and vulnerability to similar events. As Shapcott (1988, p.27) put it, "Sometimes it is far better for our peace of mind to believe that the woman next door did something

wrong than the rapist could just have easily have struck at our house.” This attitude is also consistent with cognitive dissonance theory where the victim of a crime is seen in a bad light so that their suffering can be justified, and considered as being brought on themselves. This is one of the reasons why people find it easier to believe victims of date rape did something to precipitate their own victimisation. This widely shared belief may also benefit a male offender who has committed date rape by shifting the blame from offender to the victim by emphasising the victim’s deserving behaviour or characteristics (Weis & Borges, 1973).

Extending this theory, a prediction could be made with regards to the amount of identification shown to a male who either forces his date to have sexual intercourse, or engages in mutually consenting intercourse, and to his victim (or non-victim) presented in a hypothetical dating scenario. Considering the principle from Lerner’s (1980) just-world theory, the female victim in a date rape situation is likely to be considered more responsible the more identification female participants demonstrated towards her (I’m like her, but I haven’t been raped; therefore she must have done something to deserve it). Conversely, males who identify strongly with the male perpetrator in the story are expected to attribute less responsibility for the sexual assault towards him. An interesting comparison can be made because the present study has also incorporated a comparative consenting version of the story to provide a contrast with the forced sex scenario. Both male and female participants are predicted to show greater identification with the couple in the mutually consenting version than the date rape version.

Socio-cultural aspects

Much has been written from a socio-cultural perspective of rape, wherein the occurrence of rape is perceived as the extreme point on a continuum

of accepted aggressive sexual behaviour. Normal sex-role socialisation processes such as those described below are therefore seen as sustaining patterns of interaction between men and women which are conducive to sexual aggression (Brownmiller, 1975; Burkhart & Stanton, 1988; Burt, 1980; Check & Malamuth, 1983). Weis and Borges (1973) contended that females are socialised to become "legitimate" or "safe" victims of rape. If a rape victim is unable to relate her experiences or have blame and accusation brought against her assailant, then she does not present much of a threat to the rapist. Shapcott (1988) contended in his study of rape in New Zealand that rape, unlike any other serious crime such as burglary, has a set of beliefs operating for the accused. A victim of burglary does not have to prove for example, that they did not give their consent to having their property taken, or justify why they didn't fight the burglar off, yet these aspects for the crime of rape often forms the basis on which guilt of the offender is defended, and the victim's behaviour is called into question. It also means that as cases of date rape go unreported, maintenance of false beliefs and stereotypes about date rape, victims and offenders will continue (Weis & Borges, 1973).

Traditionally raised to accept male dominance, and rely on males for protection and economic independence, passivity and submissiveness are part of the socially approved feminine role. Males on the other hand, are encouraged to display 'masculine' traits such as being strong, active, and independent. Muehlenhard, Friedman, & Thomas, (1985) investigated aspects of women's dating behaviour that did not adhere to traditional feminine sex-role expectations that might influence men's attitudes towards justifying date rape. It was reported that rape was considered more justifiable if the woman went to the man's home as opposed to an public outing elsewhere, and asked the man out on a date instead of vice versa. These behaviours were considered to be indicative to the male partner that the woman wanted sex, and significantly more male

participants believed that the woman's behaviour had led the man to believe she was willing, and that rape was therefore more justifiable. The extent that both male and female participants in the present study would be willing to assign responsibility towards the female in the date rape scenario may offer some support for this finding as the scenario depicts the female accepting an invitation to accompany her male companion back to his house after going out to a public place.

Manliness is often associated with aggression, including sexual aggression. Men are typically the initiators of sexual intimacy, while women are the sexual 'gatekeepers', monitoring how far relations will proceed. Women have traditionally been raised to be gentle, kind, caring, supportive, and non-aggressive. These traits provide a psychological barrier which inhibit their ability to fend off a would-be attacker. It is unlikely that a woman in whom these values have been nurtured would consider seriously harming an attacker any way she could, and if she did, her defence strategies are likely to be ineffectual (Weis & Borges, 1973). Many women are discouraged from non-feminine displays of aggression and physical fighting unlike men. Traditional advice from law enforcement officials to women who found themselves in an assault situation reinforced the notion of women as weak and incapable of defending themselves when confronted with an male assailant. They advised women to use physical resistance as a last resort when all other methods of verbal reasoning and pleading had failed. Women were warned that to offer physical resistance would probably only arouse and excite an offender more, or worse, anger him and incite him to use more violence (Bart & O'Brien, 1985). Hence the socialisation process of males and females allows sexually aggressive men to develop belief systems that allow them to justify sexual assault or not define it as such. It also teaches women to take responsibility for their own victimisation and perpetuates beliefs that allows others to perceive her in this role.

Males and females are also raised with a sexual double standard. For men, being sexually active and engaging in numerous sexual relationships prior to settling down is considered to be normal male behaviour, reinforcing their masculine self-image and identity as sexual conquerors. Women however, may earn themselves a reputation for being 'easy' or 'loose' by expressing their sexuality in similar fashion to men. Often, it is women who are relatively sexually inexperienced or without a 'reputation' that men end up marrying. Hence, men may interpret a woman's 'no' as an offering of token resistance to his sexual advances because she does not want to appear immoral (Check & Malamuth, 1983; Snell & Godwin, 1993; Weis & Borges 1973). Muehlenhard and Hollabaugh (1988) confirmed this belief in their study that investigated whether women had ever offered token resistance to sex. It was reported that thirty nine percent of female respondents indicated that they had said no when they really meant yes at least on one occasion. The primary reason reported by these women was because they did not want to appear promiscuous by not having appeared to have offered at least some measure of resistance. Attitude measures showed that these women held more traditional beliefs about male / female relationships that were related to traditional gender scripts, such as that it is acceptable for men to use physical force in relationships, and that women enjoy men using physical force. The majority of male respondents in a conceptually related study also reported that they did not believe women when they said 'no' (Muehlenhard & Felts, 1987, cited in Muehlenhard & Hollabaugh, p. 872). In today's society traditional gender scripts are likely to be less prominent, but the antecedent attitudes that reinforce traditional sex-role stereotypes may be harder to modify (Burt, 1980; Synder, 1981).

There are few studies which have investigated the relationship between sex-role stereotype use and sexual offending. Check and Malamuth (1983) argued that the context within which date rape occurs, and individual

differences among observers in their adherence to sex-role stereotypes affected their reactions to rape. Check and Malamuth theorised that stereotypical cultural beliefs, or learned behavioural scripts that define the dating and sexual interaction system are a function of sex role stereotypes, such as the belief that sexual coerciveness is normal behaviour for males to engage in. This theory was tested by the measurement of sexual arousal patterns of both rapists and non-offenders to depictions of rape, and it was found that males who adhered strongly to traditional sex-role stereotypes revealed similar arousal patterns as identified rapists in response to depictions of rape, particularly a non-consenting acquaintance rape scenario. Low sex-role stereotyping individuals showed the opposite effect; they reported lower arousal levels to rape depictions that were similar to a non-rapist sample.

Endorsement of rape myths

The following commonly held beliefs about rape which have been proven to be untrue and are now widely accepted throughout the literature as being rape myths are: women say 'no' but they really mean 'yes'; only 'bad' girls get raped; male sexual frustration causes rape; women lead men on by dressing or acting seductively; rape is an impulsive act; any healthy women can resist a rapist; women secretly desire to be raped; women enjoy being raped; many women make false complaints of rape to exact revenge, or invent allegations of rape from fantasy or because they have something to hide; a real rape victim usually reports the incident to the police straightaway; rapists are sex-starved, insane or both (Burt, 1980; Field, 1978; Shapcott, 1988; Stone et al., 1983; Weis & Borges, 1973).

Burt (1980) demonstrated that the public in general are willing to accept rape myths with the finding that over half of the population in her study showed considerable agreement with items from her Rape Myth Acceptance scale to statements such as: "In the majority of rapes, the victim was promiscuous or had a bad reputation" and "A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on the first date implies she is willing to have sex."

In general population studies, individuals were found to be less likely to define a sexually coercive situation as rape, the more acceptance they demonstrated towards rape myths (Burt & Albin, 1981). In her studies with rapists, Burt (1978) found that convicted rapists were more willing to justify violence in scenarios describing forceful rape, the higher the scores on the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. One of the present study's main goals is to investigate the relationship between rape myth acceptance as measured by Burt's (1980) Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, and the likelihood a forced sexual intercourse scenario is identified as rape. The result of this analysis is predicted to support Burt's findings.

Sex differences and rape attitudes

From a recent meta-analysis of 72 studies of rape attitudes, it appears one of the most common individual variables predictive of rape supportive attitudes is sex, with the overall finding that men typically show a higher degree of rape myth acceptance than women (Anderson et al., 1997). One study which didn't find any sex differences in the extent the female victim was considered more responsible (Thornton, Robbins, & Johnson, 1981), and an earlier study that found females blamed the victim more (Shotland & Goodstein, 1983) have been attributed to the diversity of demographic and personality variables of the perceiver such as age and SES (Anderson

et al., 1997; Burt, 1980). Sex-role stereotypes, attitudes towards women, acceptance of violence against women (Acock & Ireland, 1983; Burt, 1980; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Koss, Leonard, Beezley, & Oros, 1985; Krulewitz & Payne, 1978; Muehlenhard, Friedman, & Thomas, 1985; Shotland & Goodstein, 1983; Thornton, Ryckman, & Robbins, 1982), and experiential variables such as victimisation or contact with other sexual assault victims, and combining sexual behaviour with aggression in past experiences, have all been shown to influence attitudes towards rape in any given sample (Anderson et al., 1997; Burt, 1980; Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987). Anderson et al., (1997) found a small but significant difference with respect to age that indicated older respondents held more accepting attitudes toward rape than younger respondents; whereas Burt (1980) reported higher SES factors such as educational level and occupation was associated with less acceptance of rape myths, although this relationship has not been widely tested. Individuals who scored highly on instruments measuring sex-role stereotyping were more likely to believe traditional gender scripts (such as women who resist men's sexual advances are perceived as offering token opposition) and were therefore more likely to perceive date rape as more justifiable (Burt, 1980; Check & Malamuth, 1983). Acceptance of violence against women is also associated with rape-supportive attitudes, as is less egalitarian attitudes towards women (Burt, 1980; Muehlenhard et al., 1985; Shotland & Goodstein, 1983). Having prior experience of sexual assault from a victim perspective revealed counter-intuitive results in the meta-analysis conducted by Anderson et al., (1997), with the overall finding that victimisation tended to increase rape myth acceptance. Past experiences of practicing sexually aggressive behaviour is also associated with endorsement of rape myths and victim blame for date rape (Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987), consistent with Lerner's (1980) just world hypothesis reviewed earlier.

One other important finding reported by Jenkins and Dambrot (1987), was women were also less likely to agree that a rape occurred on a date where the male had paid for the expenses compared with a unplanned pick-up at a concert. The results indicated that females were more affected by situational dating factors in their attitudes towards rape, whereas males were influenced by their previous sexual history and rape myth acceptance (Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987). These results are consistent with the finding that men classified according to their previous sexual experiences involving aggression was predictive of other rape related attitudes such as acceptance of sex-role stereotypes, belief in rape myths, perceiving a mixture of aggression with sexuality as normal, and believing rape prevention is women's responsibility (Koss, Leonard, Beezley, & Oros, 1985). Jenkins and Dambrot (1987) also reported that males were less likely to identify a forced sex scenario as rape than females which contrasts with an earlier study by Klemmack and Klemmack (1976), who indicated that males and females found it equally difficult to label forced sex as rape when the female victim was described as being coerced by her dating partner.

Attributions of responsibility and blame

Brownmiller (1975) believed that the perceptions or attitudes of people toward rape provided important clues for understanding both their reactions to the act itself, and their behaviour and treatment towards victims and offenders. This has important implications for professionals who may come into contact with victims of date rape such as medical personnel, police officers, and members of the justice system such as solicitors, judges, and legislative agents as they are all subject to the same prejudicial influences that help maintain rape supportive attitudes as are found throughout society. A study conducted by Field (1978) investigated the

nature of attitudes towards rape among comparative groups of citizens, convicted rapists, police officers, and rape crisis counsellors. Field developed a scale to measure people's perceptions of rape which was based on a review of commonly held beliefs or opinions about rape at the time, the 'Attitudes Toward Rape' scale or ATR.

Examples of items included in the ATR are: "A woman can be raped against her will"; "Most women secretly desire to be raped"; "A charge two days after the act has occurred is probably not rape"; "Nice women do not get raped". Participants were requested to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed to a total of 32 items. In addition, participants were given a 14 item scale to measure their degree of knowledge about rape (Rape Knowledge Test), and the Attitudes Towards Women questionnaire (Spence & Helmreich, 1972), a 25 item scale designed to assess attitudes regarding the rights and roles of women in society. Field reported that responses in the rape attitudes of police officers were more similar to the rapists than they were to the counsellors in terms of the following attitude variables:

Assigning blame to the victim for rape; that rape prevention is primarily a woman's responsibility; that punishment for rape should not be severe; that victims are likely to provoke rape through provocative dress or demeanour; that rapists are not mentally stable; that rape is not motivated by a need for power and domination; and women should not resist during rape.

Field's (1978) study highlights the finding that recovery from the trauma associated with rape depends on the quality of support available to a rape victim following an assault, particularly date rape victims who may face further trauma if they are also held accountable for their own victimisation (Jerry, Moody, & Hayes, 1980; Koss et al., 1988). It has been found that

victims raped by a romantic partner or by someone they knew increased their anxiety, self-doubt and guilt for having placed themselves into the situation in the first place, and a lack of trust for future dating interactions, which affected their social adjustment (Burkhart & Stanton, 1988).

Shotland and Goodstein (1983) manipulated the amount of force applied by the boyfriend of a hypothetical dating couple to attain sexual intercourse where the female's protests occurred either early, halfway through, or late during foreplay, and her protests consisted of either just pleading, or pleading and physically struggling. The situation was more likely to be perceived as rape when the male used more force and the female protested verbally and physically during early onset of sexual activity. This finding may be an important factor for participants' perception of the rape scenario in the present study and for their attributions of rape responsibility, as the scenario described the female's protests occurring quite late after the onset of sexual activity, and the male did not use a great deal of force.

Consequences

Many people adhere to rape myths as outlined above and therefore have pre-conceived notions about what constitutes a 'real' victim of rape (Check & Malamuth, 1983; Klemmack & Klemmack, 1976). Experiential and behavioural factors involved in a date rape situation are likely to be evaluated in a negative way against the victim who was romantically involved with the perpetrator; who went voluntarily to the place where the rape took place such as his home, or she invited him to her place; she had acted or dressed provocatively; she had been drinking alcohol or using drugs; there were no physical injuries; and she delayed reporting

the rape (Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980; McLay, 1983; Richardson & Campbell, 1982; Weis & Borges, 1973; Whatley, 1996). Hence, police are often reluctant to press ahead with charges of rape against an acquaintance or dating partner of a victim where the offender denies the allegation or claims she consented. Juries are unlikely to convict where her word is not supported by strong evidence. Judges are required to warn juries of convicting a charge of rape in the absence of corroborative evidence which tends to confirm that the crime was committed, and which also tends to prove that the accused is the offender (Buckton, 1983).

RISK FACTORS OF DATE RAPE

Media influences

Muehlenhard and Linton (1987) found that male participants in their sample reported that dates involving sexual aggression occurred more often after watching a movie. The authors suggest that movies with content portraying women responding favourably to men's sexual violence even in a subtle way may enhance their beliefs about women wanting to be dominated sexually, and being aroused by forceful conduct. Malamuth and Check (1981) reported that exposure to even these type of non-pornographic movies and materials significantly increased men's acceptance of violence against women, and slightly increased men's acceptance of rape myths.

Miscommunication about sex

Misunderstanding between men and women is believed to be related to differences in their perception of the behaviour of others. Abbey (1982)

found that men as compared with women, tended to perceive the behaviour of others in sexual terms, especially women's behaviour. For instance, women may not view cuddling or kissing as leading to further intimacy, whereas men may often interpret affectionate behaviour as a prelude to intercourse. A woman might ask a man out on a date and he may misinterpret this as indicating her interest in having sex with him (Bostwick & Delucia, 1992) which leads to misunderstanding on both sides as to the intentions of the other person. Abbey (1982) argued that men tend to perceive signs of friendliness from women as indicating sexual interest, and that they also feel more justified in forcing sex on a woman whom they believe to have been leading them on. These findings are also consistent with the findings reported by Russell (1975), and Burkhart and Stanton (1988) with regards to misperception of sexual intent reviewed in an earlier section (p. 8 - 9). In line with these explanations, the present study is predicted to show a sex difference in attributions of victim responsibility for date rape, with males expected to perceive that the victim is more responsible for sexual behaviour that occurs in the date rape scenario than female respondents.

Dating location

Consistent with research findings that date rape often occurs within the property of the assailant (Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987), going to the man's home alone was considered to place women at higher risk for sexual aggression to occur (Muehlenhard, 1988; Muehlenhard et al., 1985; Weis & Borges, 1973). There is a much less chance of unforeseen interruptions, and there is a general tendency for people to perceive women going to the man's house as indicative that the woman wants sex (Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987). 'Parking' in the man's car was also strongly associated with sexual coerciveness on dates. Considering men's tendency

to overestimate their partner's sexual willingness, and women's tendency to underestimate their partner's sexual expectations, and in the absence of more direct communication, a male is likely to perceive sexual intent from the woman's behaviour. According to Muehlenhard, the greater the sexual implications of the dating activity, the greater the likelihood that men will perceive the situation more sexually than women (Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987).

THE SOCIAL PERCEIVER

The importance of identifying attitudes related to rape acceptance is clear when considering one of the primary findings from cognitive research; when an attitude is brought to mind, related thoughts and attitudes such as sex-role stereotypes and acceptance of violence against women, are also activated (Burt, 1980; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Research from cognitive psychology studies suggests the importance of identifying rape related attitudes in terms of predicting behaviour that maintains rape acceptance.

The realm of social cognition research has advanced knowledge on how people process information about social behaviour in everyday life. Rather than being conceived as passive recipients of external information, people are seen as active gatherers of material as they try to perceive meaning from the events and people around them (Ashmore, 1981; Yzerbyt & Leyens, 1991). Fiske and Taylor (1991) contended that people have insufficient cognitive resources to process in depth all the social information impinging on them from the environment, and hence, perceivers were conceived of as *cognitive misers*, who were motivated to conserve their cognitive processing resources wherever possible. One way of conserving cognitive resources is to employ short cut strategies in order

to simplify complex problems, or perform immediate social judgements about people and situations. Examples of cognitive short-cut processing strategies are stereotypes which are structured sets of beliefs or expectancies about a social group's behaviour, and well learned gender scripts such as sex-roles, that are not necessarily accurate (Ashmore, 1981). Stereotypes function to summarise and organise knowledge about people as perceivers attempt to predict and explain the behaviour of social groups and the individual group members (Ashmore, 1981). In stereotyping, the perceiver categorises other individuals according to obvious characteristics such as sex (women and men), and attributes generalised sets of characteristics that apply to all members that belong to that category such as women are sensitive, and men are strong (Synder, 1981). Fiske and Taylor (1991) developed their model of the social perceiver first as a cognitive miser, then later as a *motivated tactician*. This term described perceivers who could decide how and when to allocate cognitive resources in response to specific processing goals and needs. Specifically, perceivers may elect to trade cognitive efficiency for more effortful and less stereotypical evaluations in the interests of accurately processing information, or to avoid social disapproval, where the outcome of a more biased form of thinking could be seen as undesirable.

The socio-cultural analysis of date rape reviewed earlier (pp. 15 - 19) highlights the importance of sex-role stereotypes and behavioural scripts which guide behaviour within a dating situation. It has been argued that many beliefs about the dating system are embedded within a cultural belief system that endorses sex-role stereotypes (such as women say 'no' but mean yes) that leads to misinterpretation between dating couples about each others' sexual needs and wants, and as has been discussed in the literature, is a situation that may lead to date rape.

The research reviewed earlier points to a relationship between rape supportive attitudes and experience of sexual aggression (Koss et al., 1985; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Muehlenhard et al., 1985, pp. 18 - 21). Activation of stereotypes also leads people to be selective in attending to information that is consistent with their preconceived ideas and beliefs, and therefore remember stereotype-consistent information better than material that is inconsistent (Bodenhausen, 1988). Drawing on social-cognitive research which discussed cognitive processes involved in sexual offending, this selective attention can be understood in the context of statements made by sexual offenders after an assault such as 'the victim wanted to have sex and enjoyed it', leading to predominant memory for such information (Johnston & Ward, 1996). A man who perpetrates date rape may interpret aspects of the victim's behaviour such as being alone with him at his home and passively resisting his sexual advances as indicating that she really wanted sex, but said 'no' because she did not want to appear promiscuous, thus confirming his stereotypic beliefs of women in a dating interaction. In this way, stereotypic biases in interpreting the behaviour of others are seen as perpetuating sex-role stereotypes (Synder, 1981).

Social cognitive research has also shown that perceivers employ inferential mental short cuts where available, and also in response to limited availability of cognitive resources such as under a high cognitive processing load where overall capacity is limited. Indeed, research has shown perceivers rely more on stereotypes in making evaluations under high cognitive load conditions (Macrae, Hewstone, & Griffiths, 1993; Macrae, Milne, & Bodenhausen, 1994), and in affective states (Macrae et al., 1994; Stroessner, Hamilton, & Mackie, 1992). Stereotypes are useful because they permit information to be processed quickly and easily. Thus, perceivers have more available resources for a second task when performing an evaluative task that requires some kind of impression

formation or social judgement. Perceivers will employ the use of stereotypic labels to assist them in the inferential task when there is a lack of room available for more analytic processing (Macrae et al., 1994). Less attention is paid to the actual information, and perceivers rely instead on readily available heuristic processing to form an opinion.

Increasing the cognitive demands on social perceivers will increase their use of stereotypes. This has been shown in studies which have employed interpretation and memory tasks (Bodenhausen & Lichtenstein, 1987; Macrae et al., 1993). Additionally, research on the relationship between affective states and cognitive processing has shown that induced positive and negative mood states increased the use of stereotypes (Stroessner et al., 1992). One method of inducing a positive mood state which has been successful in previous mood related research is to have participants recall pleasant past experiences (Blaney, 1986). In order to investigate whether an induced positive mood would influence the way participants judged a forced sex scenario and adherence to rape myths, the present study included a mood manipulation that asked respondents to recall details of a pleasurable past sexual experience or personal fantasy. This manipulation was selected on the basis that the topic participants were asked to write about was related to the sexual context of the scenario. Currently, there is some debate between two main explanations with regards to the cognitive processes which result in stereotype use in a positive mood, the motivational, and the cognitive arguments, which will be briefly considered here.

The motivational argument states that a positive mood will motivate perceivers to maintain their pleasant affective state, and this results in perceivers processing information less thoroughly. When people feel good, they do not wish to spoil their happy mood by attending to material which may change it. Alternatively, perceivers may have a sense of well-being

with the world as a result of their positive mood, so that they do not feel the need to focus their attention on new information. In a similar manner, a negative mood is believed to motivate perceivers to seek new material as a distraction strategy from the negative affect, or as a signal to change the mood state. In either case, the motivational argument predicts opposite effects for positive and negative mood states, which has not always been the case (Bodenhausen & Kramer, 1990a; Bodenhausen, Kramer & Susser, 1994).

On the other hand, the cognitive argument predicts that positive or negative mood states result in higher stereotype usage because the affective state depletes cognitive capacity, or because the perceiver is distracted from an information processing task. This explanation predicts analogous effects for both positive and negative mood states which also have not always proved to be the case. Most of the evidence to date seems to favour the cognitive argument because subjects were more stereotypical in their judgements whether the positive mood state was induced either through the recall of a happy life event, or by contracting their facial muscles to produce a smile (Bodenhausen & Kramer, 1990b).

Considering Burt's (1980) research on attitudes towards rape and rape myth acceptance reviewed earlier, it is predicted that male and female participants who are given a memory task whilst reading a date rape scenario, and then respond to measures of victim / perpetrator responsibility, and Burt's (1980) Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, will reveal greater endorsement of rape myths and attribute more responsibility to the female victim. These participants are also less likely to perceive the situation as rape compared with participants with no cognitive load. Similarly, participants who are subjected to an affective load (an increase in arousal and excitement) are predicted to endorse rape myths, and hold

the victim of date rape more accountable than participants without any cognitive load.

The social-cognitive field of psychology has examined the processes involved in the existence, use, and maintenance of social and cultural stereotypes in everyday perception and has provided insights into understanding behaviour that may lead to a date rape situation. It is useful to identify cognitive processes that are related to beliefs about rape not only because of the effect attitudes have on behaviour, but also in the maintenance of rape myths and stereotypes.

This discussion now turns to consider the implications of the research reviewed in the literature, and to reiterate the predictions derived from the review to be tested. One of the most common methods applied in rape attitudes research is presentation of a rape vignette which have varied aspects of the events that occur, followed by assessment of responsibility for the actors in the scenario (Anderson et al., 1997). In the present study, constructs of responsibility for rape, the severity of the psychological impact of a forced sexual experience on the victim, and participants' willingness to label the non-consenting sexual scenario as rape were measured by the 'Sexual Behaviour in a Dating Situation' questionnaire, which was adapted from Deitz and Byrnes (1981) Rape Responsibility Questionnaire (RRQ). This questionnaire was based upon the findings from research of social perception of responsibility for sexual assault (Calhoun, Selby, & Warring, 1976; Jones & Aronson, 1973). Research has shown that items on the RRQ correlate significantly with the widely used Rape Empathy Scale (RES) which has been used to evaluate subjects' empathy toward rape victims and rapists (Deitz, Blackwell, Daley, & Bentley, 1982). The RRQ taps a wider variety of perceptions and attitudes towards actors in a given scenario than the RES, and is therefore appropriate for inclusion in this study. Additionally, the RRQ has

empirically shown its accuracy in examining the attributions of responsibility for rape in previous research (Deitz et al., 1982; Deitz & Byrnes, 1981; Deitz, Littman & Bentley, 1984).

In 1980, Burt developed the Rape Myths Acceptance Scale (RMAS) based on her study of nearly 600 adults on their attitudes and beliefs towards rape, and is one of the most widely cited scales in the rape attitudes literature to date (Anderson et al., 1997). This questionnaire identifies false beliefs about rape, rape offenders and their victims, attributions of victim blame and common myths that minimise the act of rape as a serious and violent crime. Higher scores on the RMAS indicate greater acceptance of rape myths. Koss et al., (1985) found higher scores for sexually aggressive college men than non-aggressive college men, and higher scores have been found among convicted rapists than males from the general population (Malamuth, 1981). Hence, the RMAS is a well established and appropriate instrument for use in this study.

HYPOTHESES

The main predictions in this study fall into two main categories of sex differences and experimental condition as follows:-

Sex differences:

Male participants are predicted to show greater rape myth acceptance and attribute more responsibility towards the female victim depicted in a date rape scenario, than female participants. Male participants are predicted to perceive that the female encouraged the sexual behaviour more than

female participants and rate the psychological impact of the sexual incident as less severe than female respondents. The literature reviewed indicates that females would view the male perpetrator as more responsible and the female victim as less responsible for a forced sexual experience than males. Two separate sex predictions are hypothesised for participants' identification with the male and female actors in the story because it is expected males are more likely to identify with the male in the story than the female, and vice versa for the female participants. Thus, female participants are likely to perceive the victim as more responsible in the date rape scenario the higher the level of identification shown towards her, whereas males who identify strongly with the male perpetrator are also more likely to perceive the victim as more responsible. The extent to which male and female participants would correctly label a forced sex situation as rape is predicted to reveal little difference as the research has shown mixed results (Jenkins & Dambrot, 1987; Klemmack & Klemmack, 1976). The greater the acceptance of rape myths, the less likely a forced sex situation will be defined as rape.

Differences between experimental conditions:

Participants in the control group who were presented with a consenting sex scenario are predicted to differ significantly from the three experimental conditions who were presented with the date rape scenario (low cognitive load, high cognitive load, and high affective load), on their ratings of the extent they perceived the scenario was describing a rape situation. Control condition participants are not expected to perceive the mutually consenting encounter as rape, nor to rate it as having had a severe psychological impact on the female as compared with the other three groups. A comparison of participants' ratings of responsibility for the male and female

actor for the sexual incident in the control group are predicted to show approximately equal ratings.

The high cognitive load (HCL) and high affective load (HAL) conditions are predicted to show greater rape myth acceptance than participants in the low cognitive load (LCL). Participants in the HCL conditions and HAL conditions are less likely to perceive a forced sex scenario as rape, and view the male perpetrator (Jim) in the story as less responsible, and the female victim (Diane) as more responsible for the forced sexual intercourse than participants in the low cognitive load (LCL). Additionally, participants in the HCL and HAL conditions are predicted to perceive that Diane encouraged the sexual incident more, and are predicted to rate the psychological impact of forced sexual intercourse as less severe than LCL participants.

CHAPTER TWO - METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were 32 male and 38 female students currently enrolled in undergraduate ($n = 63$) and graduate ($n = 7$) courses at Canterbury University who volunteered to participate in response to advertisements located on Departmental noticeboards throughout the University. Participants from a volunteer Psychology subject pool were also contacted, and students in undergraduate Psychology classes.

Female participants in this sample were aged between 18 - 45 (mean age = 23), whereas the age of male participants ranged between 19 - 38 (mean age = 25). Thirteen females were single at the time of the study, 18 were currently in a dating relationship, 5 were either living with their partner or married, and 2 were separated or divorced. Eleven males were single, 12 were dating someone, 8 were living together or married, and 1 was divorced. All respondents stated that they were heterosexual, and all bar two identified themselves as European; one female identified herself as part European and part Pacific Islander, and one female identified herself as part Lebanese as well as part European.

Additionally, ten post-graduate students from the Psychology Department volunteered to participate in a pilot test of one of the experimental conditions (High Affective Load).

Design

The study is a 2 (sex of participant: male / female) x 4 (experimental conditions: LCL / HCL / HAL / Control) design.

MATERIALS

The first questionnaire presented to respondents was a seven-item demographic questionnaire to obtain information about respondents' age, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, and present course(s) at University.

Participants were then given an account of a couple on a date. This vignette was derived from Shotland and Goodstein's (1983) research, which investigated rape perception in a dating situation, and adapted to represent a New Zealand context (see Appendix A). In the story, a couple who knew one another from university and had dated on several occasions went out together to watch a movie. After the movie they both went to the male's flat, and the scenario described the couple kissing, which led to a gradual escalation of sexual behaviour. Initially, the female did not protest at the actions of her dating partner until he removed all her clothing. At this stage, the female began to verbally protest and wanted him to stop. She tried several more times, but the male ignored her protests and the scenario culminated with the male forcing his date to have sexual intercourse. An identical version of the story was given to participants in the control condition, except that the female's verbalisations were reworded to indicate her total consent to her partner's efforts at intercourse.

After reading the scenario, participants were given a questionnaire entitled "Sexual Behaviour In A Dating Situation" which consisted of ten 7-point Likert items (see Appendix B). The questionnaire was adapted from Deitz and Byrnes (1981) Rape Responsibility Questionnaire (RRQ), which has previously been used as a measure to assess subjects' perceptions of events in a hypothetical rape scenario. The original version consisted of 12 items, however 3 items which asked about certainty of the perpetrator's guilt, estimates of the seriousness of the crime, and the number of years subjects would designate as a jail term for the defendant were omitted as they were not appropriate for the control group which evaluated a consensual version of the same story.

The nine items which were used in the present study addressed perceptions of male and female responsibility for the sexual incident, the likelihood the female's behaviour encouraged the sexual incident, participants' estimated severity of the encounter on the female, the extent to which the victim's involvement was due to chance, the degree of identification with both the male and female in the story, and subjects' personal feelings towards both of them.

A tenth item which measured the extent to which the forced sex scenario was identified as a rape situation, was presented separately following participants completion (and the experimenter's collection) of the previous nine items. This was done to ensure the previous answers were not affected by the appearance of the word 'rape', which is a topic that is likely to provoke social desirability effects, particularly where a value judgement is called for.

Participants were then given the Rape Myths Acceptance Questionnaire (Burt, 1980), which was entitled "Social Perception and Sexual Behaviour in Dating Relationships", for the purpose of this study. The title was

changed in order to minimise priming and social desirability effects that may have been evoked by the original title. The questionnaire consists of 19 statements about rape and measures respondents acceptance or rejection of common rape myths (see Appendix C). Each item asks to what extent respondents agree / disagree to the statement scored on a 7-point Likert scale. For example, item 1 measures adherence to the myth that a woman is willing to have sex if she goes to the residence of a man on the first date. Item 11 measures the extent respondents agree that having a male partner force sex on a woman is her own fault if she has engaged in necking or petting beforehand and has let things get out of control. A total RMA score is obtained by summing the responses to all the items. The wording to three victim questions were altered from the original version to provide appropriate ethnic descriptions depicting New Zealand society. Question 16 was changed from 'a black woman' to 'a Maori woman'; Question 18 was changed from 'an Indian woman' to 'a Polynesian woman'; and Question 19 was changed from 'a white woman' to 'a European woman'.

Pilot Tests

Memory load condition

The high cognitive memory load condition (HCL) was initially trialed informally on six associates of the experimenter to obtain the length of time it took for a random eight digit number to be memorised. The result from this trial indicated participants could be expected to memorise the number within 30 seconds.

Participants were requested to write the number as they recalled it on a separate piece of paper when 30 seconds was up, and this was compared with the number recorded at the conclusion of the RMA questionnaire. The results showed all but three participants ($n = 67$) accurately recalled their number at the conclusion of the study. The three participants who showed loss of recall after the processing period were excluded from the final analysis as they may not have been attending to it during the study.

Affective load condition

Ten post-graduate students from the Psychology Department at the Canterbury University volunteered to trial the manipulation for the high affective load condition (HAL). The students were verbally informed that they would be asked to write about a recent sexual experience (or sexual fantasy) they found exciting, including as many details as possible about the location, the events that occurred immediately leading up to the encounter, and how their partner looked and felt. Students were asked to write for approximately 10 - 15 minutes, and in the interests of obtaining a positive affective response, were also informed that they could take their narrative with them when they left so it would remain private.

Each student was given a questionnaire containing three questions that formed the pre and post measures to fill out prior to beginning their story (see Appendix D). The questionnaire sought to obtain measures of affective mood on the three dimensions of excitement, arousal, and happiness scored on seven-point Likert scales (1 - 'not at all'; 7 - 'very'), with the exception of the happiness dimension which was visually depicted along seven graduated smiley-to-neutral-to-non-smiley faces. After filling out

the pre-test measure, students commenced writing their story, at the conclusion of which they were given the same questionnaire to complete.

Repeated measures t-test for both arousal and excitement revealed significant effects ($t(9) = 6.46$, $p < .05$; $t(9) = 4.71$, $p < .05$ respectively). Mean ratings were higher on the post than the pre - measures indicating that the task increased feelings of arousal and excitement ($M_s = 3.0$ vs. 5.4 ; and 3.9 vs. 5.0 respectively).

Additionally, the same pre and post-test measure of mood was completed by every second HAL respondent ($n = 8$) to provide an additional manipulation check. Results supported the findings from the pilot study for the dimensions of arousal and excitement ($t(7) = 4.24$, $p < .05$; $t(7) = 3.05$, $p < .05$; $M_s = 1.62$ vs. 3.37 ; and 3.12 vs. 4.12 respectively). The dimension of happiness was not significant in either case. Participants were no happier at the conclusion of the affective task than at the beginning. However, participants clearly experienced an increase in arousal and excitement effecting a positive mood change.

PROCEDURE

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. The majority of participants completed the study individually, with only the experimenter present. However, eight respondents completed the study in pairs; each was seated where they could not view the other's responses. Each person was greeted by the experimenter and invited to be seated at a desk and read through an information sheet containing an outline of the study to follow (refer to Appendix E). Participants were verbally informed that the study was investigating

perception of sexual behaviour among dating couples based on people's opinion. Participants were asked for their consent by agreeing to the conditions indicated on the sheet, and once they indicated this, to commence filling out the demographic questionnaire underneath. All respondents verbally indicated their consent to continue which formed the basis for informed consent.

After participants in the low cognitive load condition (LCL) completed the demographic questionnaire, they were presented with the rape vignette, and the "Sexual Behaviour In A Dating Situation" questionnaire, omitting the final tenth item. Participants were instructed to read the story first, and then complete the questionnaire. When this was completed, the experimenter collected the finished data and presented the final tenth item on a separate piece of paper. It was explained to respondents that the question formed part of the questionnaire they had just filled in, but the study design necessitated that it be presented separately. When respondents indicated their choice, the experimenter collected it and presented the final questionnaire, Social Perception and Sexual Behaviour In Dating Relationships, (or the RMA).

After they had completed the demographic questionnaire, participants in the high cognitive load condition (HCL) were instructed to memorise an eight digit number within 30 seconds, which they would be asked to recall upon completion of the study. The same randomly selected number was projected onto a screen and after 30 seconds, the projector was switched off, and subjects asked to write the number on a piece of paper, which was then collected and held by the experimenter. The procedure from this point followed the same as for the LCL group, with the exception that respondents were asked to write the number as they recalled it following the final question on the RMA.

After completion of the demographic questionnaire, participants in the high affective load condition (HAL) were given a separate piece of paper with instructions which asked them to write for approximately 10 - 15 minutes about a personal or fantasy sexual experience that was particularly exciting to them. As with the first pilot trial, respondents were asked to record details of the location, how his / her partner looked and felt at the time, and the events that took place leading up to the encounter, in order to produce a strong affective reaction. As pointed out by the experimenter, an envelope was provided for the participants to place their finished compositions to maintain confidentiality, and this was taken by them when they left. At no stage did the experimenter view the stories, as was indicated to each participant verbally. The rest of the procedure followed the same as for the previous two groups. Additionally, every second HAL respondent was also given a pilot pre and post test measure of mood to fill out during the writing exercise as an additional manipulation check.

Finally, participants in the fourth condition, which formed the baseline group, were given a different version of the dating scenario from the previous three groups, where the evening culminated in consenting sex between the couple, and not a rape experience. This group followed an identical procedure as for the first group (LCL).

Following the completion of the RMA for all four groups, respondents were given an information sheet which formed part of the debriefing process ("About the Study". See Appendix F). It included an introduction to the study, a definition of date rape and current estimated prevalence from both New Zealand and American sources, a description and rationale of the study procedure, the goals of the study and hypotheses, and finally, contact numbers for free advice and counselling with respect to any concerns raised by the material in the study. The experimenter explained to participants in the control group the last paragraph on page one of the

debriefing form which referred to the scenario typifying a date rape encounter evaluated by the other three groups did not apply to the version they read. It was pointed out that the version they had read described a consensual encounter to provide a baseline measure, and participants were given a copy of the date rape version to compare with.

All participants were thanked for their time, and given the option to either stay to read the debriefing form through or to take it away with them. They were also verbally invited to ask any questions. All were offered a lucky dip which contained one mystery envelope with \$50 cash while the rest were \$1 Instant Kiwi "scratch-and-win" tickets.

CHAPTER THREE - RESULTS

The mean scores for Rape Myth Acceptance and items on the Sexual Behaviour Questionnaire as a function of participant sex and experimental condition are presented in Table 3.1. (see next page). Preliminary analyses of participants' relationship status did not reveal any differences on the dependent measures, and are not considered further.

Rape myth acceptance

Items 2, and 14 -19 were reversed coded so that high scores represent high endorsement of rape myths. Scores on the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale were summed across the 19 items to obtain a total Rape Myth Acceptance Score (RMAS). Possible scores range from 19 to 103. Salter (1988) suggested that a mean score above 53 on the Burt scale shows adherence to a number of myths. Scores from the present study were at the low end of the scale and ranged from 19 (lowest possible score and no adherence to rape myths) to 77 (adherence to a number of myths). The majority of participants obtained scores lower than 53 ($n = 66$), whereas three participants obtained a score greater than 53. Only one participant showed no adherence to any myths with the lowest possible score of 19.

A 2 (sex of participant: male / female) X 4 (experimental condition: LCL / HCL / HAL / control) ANOVA on RMAS revealed a main effect for condition that approached significance, $F(3,59) = 2.57$; $p < .06$, with the low cognitive load (LCL) condition reporting higher rape myth acceptance than the high cognitive load (HCL) and high affective load (HAL) conditions.

TABLE 3.1: Table Of Mean Scores For Rape Myth Acceptance and Items From The Sexual Behaviour Questionnaire As a Function of Participant Sex and Experimental Condition.

DEPENDENT VARS	MALE				FEMALE			
	LCL	HCL	HAL	CONT	LCL	HCL	HAL	CONT
RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE	42.20	34.80	33.37	30.14	36.83	34.00	30.90	31.00
SCENARIO IS RAPE	6.40	6.60	6.75	2.42	6.33	6.62	6.70	1.14
FEELINGS FOR DIANE	4.40	5.20	5.50	5.00	4.50	4.87	4.40	4.71
FEELINGS FOR JIM	2.40	1.80	1.25	4.14	1.91	2.25	1.80	3.85
RESPONSIBILITY DIANE	3.20	4.00	2.50	4.57	3.25	3.25	3.50	5.14
RESPONSIBILITY JIM	5.80	6.80	5.37	5.57	5.75	6.50	6.10	4.28
IDENTIFICATION WITH DIANE	3.80	4.00	4.50	3.71	3.91	3.75	4.60	4.14
IDENTIFICATION WITH JIM	3.10	2.20	1.87	4.71	2.16	2.12	2.40	2.28
DIANE INVOLVED SEX BY CHANCE*	2.70	3.00	2.87	3.42	2.83	2.87	2.70	2.71
ENCOURAGED SEX DIANE**	4.60	3.00	3.00	4.28	4.08	3.75	4.10	5.57
SEVERITY PSYC IMPACT - DIANE	6.50	6.80	6.37	4.14	6.25	6.12	6.80	3.42

* Question seven on the Sexual Behaviour Questionnaire, "To what extent was Diane's involvement in the sexual incident due to chance?"

**Question eight on the Sexual Behaviour Questionnaire, "What is the likelihood that Diane did something to encourage the sexual incident?"

The control group reported the lowest rape myth acceptance out of all the groups. Post-hoc analyses (Tukey, $p < .05$) revealed no significant differences between rape myth scores across conditions. Mean scores for all four conditions and Rape Myth Acceptance are presented in Table 3.2 below. There were no significant main or interaction effects for sex (male / female: $M_s = 35.12$ vs. 33.18).

Table 3.2: Table of Mean Scores for Rape Myth Acceptance, Psychological Impact on Female, Perception of Rape, and Encouragement of Sex by Female as a Function of Experimental Condition.

Dependent Vars.	LCL	HCL	HAL	Control
RMAS	39.51	34.30	32.13	30.57
Psyc. Impact	6.37	6.46	6.58	3.78
Perception of rape	6.36	6.61	6.72	1.78
Encouraged sex	4.34	3.37	3.55	4.92

Attributions of rape

A 2 (sex of participant: male / female) X 4 (experimental condition: LCL / HCL / HAL / control) ANOVA on the ratings of the extent to which the scenario was perceived as rape (SBQ10), revealed a significant main effect for condition, $F(3,59) = 87.78$; $p < .00001$. Post hoc analyses (Tukey, $p < .0001$) revealed a significant difference between the control group and each of the three experimental groups, LCL, HCL, HAL, which did not differ from one another ($M_s = 1.78$ vs. 6.36 , 6.61 and 6.72). The mean score obtained for the control group is very low (1.78 out of 7), which indicates that participants were less likely to see the consenting sex version as rape than the date rape version. This analysis therefore did not

support the prediction that participants in HCL and HAL conditions would be less likely to rate the date rape scenario as rape than LCL participants. No main or interaction effects for sex were found. Table 3.2 presents the mean scores for the four experimental conditions.

Pearson Product Moment correlation analyses were conducted separately for the experimental groups (LCL, HCL, HAL) and the control group between total rape myth acceptance and the ratings of the extent to which the scenario was perceived as rape (SBQ10). No differences were found between the experimental groups, or for the control group participants. No support was found for the prediction for the experimental groups that the higher participants' rape myth acceptance, the less likely they were to rate a forced sex scenario as rape.

Responsibility for rape

A 2 (sex of participant: male / female) X 4 (experimental condition: LCL / HCL / HAL / control) X 2 (responsibility: Jim / Diane) ANOVA with repeated measures on the third factor revealed a significant main effect for responsibility, $F(1,59) = 50.27$; $p < .00001$, with participants rating the male in the scenario more responsible for the sexual behaviour than the female ($M_s = 5.77$ vs. 3.67 respectively). A significant interaction between condition and responsibility was also revealed, $F(3,59) = 4.83$; $p < .001$. Post-hoc tests (Tukey, $p < .05$) were conducted comparing ratings for male and female responsibility separately for each condition and also comparing means across conditions separately for ratings of male and female responsibility. There were significant differences between the ratings of responsibility for Jim and Diane in the three experimental conditions (LCL: $M_s = 5.77$ vs. 3.22 ; HCL: $M_s = 6.65$ vs. 3.62 ; HAL: $M_s = 5.73$ vs. 3.00) but no difference for the control condition ($M_s = 4.92$ vs. 4.85). The ratings of

responsibility for Diane showed only one significant effect across conditions between the HAL condition and control, ($M_s = 3.00$ vs. 4.85); the ratings of responsibility for Jim showed no differences across condition. Participants in the HAL condition were less likely to see the female actor as responsible for the sexual behaviour than participants in the control condition. The predicted main effect that participants in HCL and HAL conditions would consider the female in the story more responsible for the sexual behaviour than LCL participants was not supported as no significant differences were found between the mean scores of these conditions. No main or interaction effects for sex were found to support the prediction that males would find the female actor in the date rape scenario more responsible than the female participants.

A 2 (sex of participant: male / female) X 4 (experimental condition; LCL / HCL / HAL / control) ANOVA on the participants' ratings on the extent that the female actor was involved in the sexual incident by chance revealed no significant effects.

Psychological impact

A 2 (sex of participant: male / female) X 4 (experimental condition: LCL / HCL / HAL / control) ANOVA on the severity of the psychological impact of the sexual experience on the female in the story (SBQ9) revealed a significant main effect for condition, $F(3,59) = 25.95$; $p < .00001$. Post hoc analyses (Tukey, $p < .0001$) revealed a significant difference between the control group and each of the three experimental groups, LCL, HCL, HAL, which did not differ from one another ($M_s = 3.75$ vs. 6.37 , 6.46 , and 6.58). The mean scores obtained by the control condition participants indicate that they did not see the psychological impact on the female actor as being as severe as participants in the three experimental groups. This

analysis did not support the main prediction that participants in HCL and HAL conditions would be less likely to perceive the psychological impact on the female victim as less severe as a result of having experienced forced sex than LCL participants as no significant differences were found between the mean scores of these conditions. No main or interaction effects for sex were found to support the prediction that males would rate the psychological impact on the female victim in the date rape scenario as less severe than the female participants. Table 3.2 also presents the mean scores for the psychological impact on the female victim across conditions.

A Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis between participants' perception that the scenario was rape and the severity of the psychological impact on the female actor across LCL, HCL, and HAL conditions revealed a significant correlation, $r(53) = .55$; $p < .05$. This result demonstrates that the more the scenario was seen as a rape encounter, the higher the ratings of the estimated severity of psychological impact on the female actor by participants in the three date rape conditions. A correlation performed on the control condition did not reveal any significant effects.

Female's behaviour encouraged sex

A 2 (sex of participant: male / female) X 4 (experimental condition: LCL / HCL / HAL / control) ANOVA on the ratings of the degree to which the female in the story encouraged the sexual incident (SBQ8) revealed a significant effect for condition, $F(3,59) = 2.74$; $p < .05$. Post hoc analyses (Tukey, $p < .05$) did not however, reveal a significant difference across experimental conditions, (LCL, HCL, HAL, control; $M_s = 4.34, 3.37, 3.55$, and 4.92), with the largest difference found between the high cognitive load and control group. This analysis did not support the prediction that

participants in HCL and HAL conditions would perceive that the female actor in the date rape scenario encouraged the sexual encounter more than LCL participants as no significant differences were found between the mean scores of these conditions. No main or interaction effects for sex were found to support the prediction that male participants would rate the female actor as having encouraged the sexual incident more than female participants. Table 3.2 (p. 47) also presents the mean scores on the extent participants' considered that the female actor encouraged the sexual incident across conditions.

A Pearson Product Moment correlation between participants' perception that the scenario was rape and the extent that the female actor was perceived as having encouraged the sexual incident across LCL, HCL, and HAL conditions revealed a significant correlation, $r(53) = -.41$; $p < .05$. This result demonstrates that the more the scenario was seen as a rape encounter, the lower the estimated likelihood that the female actor encouraged the sexual incident in the three date rape conditions. A correlation performed on the control condition did not reveal any significant effects.

Identification with same-sex actor

A 2 (sex of participant: male / female) X 4 (experimental condition: LCL / HCL / HAL / control) ANOVA was performed on participants identification with the same-sex person in the story with a significant main effect for condition, $F(3,59) = 2.88$; $p < .05$, which was qualified by a significant interaction between sex and condition, $F(3,59) = 3.89$; $p < .01$. Post hoc analyses (Tukey, $p < .05$) were conducted comparing identification levels across the four conditions separately for each sex and comparing identification scores between the two sexes separately for each experimental condition. There was a significant difference in the ratings of

identification with the same sex actor between males and females for the HAL condition, ($M_s = 1.87$ vs. 4.60), but no further differences were found between sex of participant across conditions. For the female participants there were no significant differences across condition in the level of identification with the female actor. The prediction that the female participants would identify more with the female actor in a consensual version than a date rape version was not supported. For the male participants, however, there was an effect of condition with participants in the HCL and HAL conditions having lower identification with the male actor than participants in the control condition ($M_s = 2.20$ and 1.87 vs. 4.71). These results supported the prediction that males would identify more with the male actor in the consensual scenario than the date rape version, although identification with the male actor in the LCL condition was not significantly different from the other three groups ($M_s = 3.10$).

Pearson Product Moment correlation analyses between same-sex identification levels and attributions of responsibility of the male and female targets for the sexual incident were conducted separately for each sex across the experimental conditions, LCL, HCL, and HAL. For both the male and female participants there were no differences in the ratings of responsibility of the male or female actor for the sexual incident. For the male participants in the control condition however, there was a difference in the level of responsibility for the female actor, $r(7) = .85$; $p < .05$, indicating that male participants saw the female actor as more responsible the more they identified with the male actor in the consenting scenario. No differences were found in females' ratings of responsibility in the control condition.

Pearson Product Moment correlation analyses between same-sex identification levels and the extent that the female actor encouraged the sexual incident were conducted separately for each sex across the

experimental conditions. For the female participants there were no differences in the ratings of encouragement of sexual behaviour by the female actor, and level of identification with her. For the male participants however, there was a difference in ratings that the female actor encouraged the sexual behaviour with more identification shown with the male actor, $r(23) = .42$; $p < .05$, indicating that the more male participants identified with the male actor, the more they saw the female actor as having encouraged the sexual incident. No differences were found in the ratings of encouragement of sexual behaviour for either male or female participants in the control condition.

Feelings towards the male and female actors

A 2 (sex of participant: male / female) X 4 (experimental condition: LCL / HCL / HAL / control) X 2 (feelings: Jim / Diane) ANOVA with repeated measures on the third factor revealed significant main effects for feelings, $F(1,59) = 166.78$; $p < .00001$, and condition, $F(3,59) = 12.51$; $p < .00001$, which were qualified by a significant interaction between feelings and condition, $F(3,59) = 8.76$; $p < .0001$. Post hoc analyses (Tukey, $p < .001$) were conducted comparing participants ratings of the level of positive feelings for both the male and female actor across all four conditions. Results indicated that participants felt more positive towards the female actor than the male actor across all three experimental conditions, (LCL: $M_s = 4.45$ vs. 2.15 ; HCL: 5.03 vs. 2.02 ; HAL: 4.95 vs. 1.52), but no difference in the control condition, ($M_s = 4.85$ vs. 4.00). In all three forced sex scenario conditions, participants showed more positive feelings for the female actor than the male actor. In the control condition, participants gave approximately equal higher ratings of positive feelings for the male and female actor in the consenting sex scenario. In the HAL condition,

participants showed significantly less positive feeling towards the male actor than for the control condition ($M_s = 1.52$ vs. 4.00).

Summary of Results

To summarise:

- i. Male and female participants did not differ in their adherence to rape myths, their perception that the date rape scenario was rape, the extent to which the female encouraged the sexual incident, and the estimated severity of the impact of rape on the female. Male and female participants were more likely to perceive the male actor as more responsible for the sexual incident than the female actor across experimental conditions.
- ii. Female participants showed no differences in the level of identification with the female actor across experimental conditions. Males showed lower identification with the male actor in the HCL and HAL conditions than the control condition. Attributions of responsibility of the male or female actor for the sexual incident across experimental conditions was not affected by the levels of same-sex identification. Females showed no differences between the level of identification with the female actor and the extent she had encouraged the sexual incident across experimental condition. Males gave higher ratings that the female encouraged the sexual behaviour the more they identified with the male actor.
- iii. There were no significant differences between rape myth scores across experimental conditions. Additionally, no differences were found for the perception of rape, the extent to which the female encouraged the

sexual incident, and ratings of the estimated severity of the psychological impact on the female. Results showed that participants felt more positive towards the female than the male across all experimental conditions.

- iv. The control group gave lower ratings of the extent the scenario was rape, and the severity of the psychological impact on the female than the experimental groups. There were no differences in the amount of responsibility attributed towards either the male and female actor.

CHAPTER FOUR - DISCUSSION

SEX DIFFERENCES

Rape myth acceptance and perception of rape

In contrast with the majority of research which has reported that men adhere to rape myths more than women do (Anderson et al., 1997), the present study found no differences in the extent male and female participants were willing to endorse common myths about rape. Hence, the present study did not support Burt's (1980) findings of a high level of acceptance to rape myths, although it was reported that younger and more highly educated people have shown less stereotypic attitudes towards rape (such as endorsing sexual violence between men and women), and less rape myth acceptance. The present sample therefore may not have shown a high level of acceptance to rape myths because participants were young, educated individuals.

The prediction derived from Burt and Albin (1981), that the higher the acceptance of rape myths, the less likely a forced sex scenario would be perceived as rape was not supported. No differences were found for participants between the experimental groups. Once again, this result may be a reflection on the age and education level of the sample. Alternatively, the likelihood that the same experimental manipulations would be more effective for specific target populations (such as offenders) is consistent with the findings by Koss et al., (1985), who reported that males identified by their previous sexual histories as being aggressive, showed greater acceptance of rape myths and victim responsibility for rape than non-aggressive men. This point is returned to in a later section.

Male and female participants did not differ in their perception that the date rape scenario was rape. The earlier study by Klemmack and Klemmack (1976) reported that both males and females had difficulty in labelling forced sex as rape, which contrasts with the findings in the present study. This result is also in contrast with Jenkins and Dambrot's (1987) finding that males were less likely to perceive forced sex as rape than females. However, with respect to the former study's finding, it is possible that men and women's attitudes and beliefs about rape have changed somewhat in twenty years, and the findings reported here may represent that men and women are now more aware of the negative social implications when evaluating a hypothetical scenario that describes non-consensual sex between dating couples. The finding reported by Jenkins and Dambrot's (1987) study also revealed that males in their sample who were less likely to identify forced sex as rape had higher rape myth acceptance, and had committed sexually aggressive acts in the past. While association with rape myth acceptance for males in the present study was not related to perception of rape (see previous page), participants' sexual histories were not examined so it is difficult to make a direct comparison with this study.

Additionally, forced sex might be easier for observers to identify as rape in an experimental hypothetical scenario than from a victim perspective. The research conducted by Gavey (1992), Patton and Mannison (1995), Jenkins and Dambrot (1987), and Koss et al., (1988) are consistent on this point which seems to suggest that for victims, identifying forced sex within the context of a date as rape is difficult. Koss (1993) contended that while women will often identify forced sex that is perpetrated by a dating partner as unwanted, unpleasant, or even an assault, they prefer not to use the term rape to describe these experiences.

Psychological impact

The prediction that males would be more likely to rate the ensuing psychological impact on the female victim following a forced sex experience as less severe than female participants was not supported in the present study as male and female participants did not show any differences in their estimations of the severity of impact. However, because both male and female participants were more likely to perceive the scenario to be rape, it follows that the subsequent impact on the female would be more likely to be rated as quite severe.

Identification and responsibility for rape

Male and female participants differed in the extent to which they identified with the same sex actor in the forced sex or consenting sex scenario. Female participants' identification with the female actor was not affected by the type of situation she was presented in (consenting or non-consenting sex), whereas male participants in the high cognitive and high affective load conditions identified less with the male actor than control participants. That is, male participants in the high cognitive and high affective load conditions identified less with a male actor involved in a forced sex situation, than males in the control condition identified with the male actor involved in a consensual sex situation. Male participants in the low cognitive load did not show any differences in the amount of identification with the male actor than in the other three groups. For the male participants, the effect of condition on the level of identification for the same sex actor is partly consistent with the prediction that participants would be more likely to identify with the actor involved in a consenting than non-consenting sexual encounter, but not so for the female participants. Additionally, the more male participants in the experimental

groups identified with the male actor, the more likely they were to perceive the female actor as having encouraged the sexual incident, although female participants' ratings of the extent to which the female actor encouraged the sexual incident were not related to self reported levels of identification.

Although male and female participants' ratings of the degree that the male or female actor were responsible for the sexual incident were not related to the amount of identification with the actors across experimental conditions, male participants were more likely to perceive the female victim as having encouraged the sexual behaviour the more they identified with the male actor. Even though male participants did not differ from female participants in the extent that the forced sex scenario was identified as rape, it appears that males may have seen certain aspects of the female victim's behaviour as having encouraged the incident, which is consistent with the view that observers look for ways to justify sexual assault by attributing fault to the behaviour or character of the victim (Weis & Borges, 1973; Whatley, 1996). Hence, the findings for the male participants is partly consistent with Lerner's (1980) just-world theory mentioned earlier. However, it is not known whether certain aspects of the female's behaviour depicted in the scenario increased the likelihood for male participants to view the female as having encouraged the sexual incident such as her willingness to go to her partner's home because previous research has found that some individuals interpret a woman going to the man's home as an indication that a woman wants to have sex (Muehlenhard 1988; Muehlenhard et al., 1985; Weis & Borges, 1973). The Muehlenhard et al., study reported that males in particular were more likely to believe that the woman going to the man's home had indicated to the man that she was willing to have sex. Another aspect of the female's behaviour which may have influenced male participants' ratings of the extent the female actor encouraged the sexual incident was that she had

willingly engaged in sexually intimate behaviour beforehand which she attempted to stop at a late stage in the sexual foreplay.

It is also interesting to note that although female participants clearly perceived the forced sex scenarios to be rape, that this did not influence whether they identified with either the female who was forced to have intercourse, or the female who willingly engaged in intercourse with her dating partner. This finding is not only inconsistent with the prediction that participants would identify more with the same sex actor involved in the consenting rather than the forced sex scenario, but it also suggests that females may be familiar with either type of scenario in their personal experience. However, this suggestion contrasts with majority of research which found that past experiences of sexual victimisation had the effect of increasing females' rape myth acceptance due to the victim's perceiving that sexually coercive behaviour is a common occurrence within intimate relationships (Anderson et al., 1997; Burt 1980). Female participants however, did not show a greater acceptance of rape myths than male participants in the present study.

EXPERIMENTAL CONDITION

Rape myth acceptance and perception of rape

Comparing rape myth acceptance scores across conditions, participants with no cognitive pre-load (low cognitive load group) who rated a forced sex scenario obtained the highest total rape myth acceptance scores, whereas the lowest scores were obtained by control group participants who read a consenting sexual encounter (see Table 3.2, p. 47). Although this finding of the difference in total rape myth acceptance only approached significance, it is interesting because it contrasts directly with the findings

from the cognitive literature which predicted participants in the high cognitive and affective load groups were more likely to rely on stereotypical information such as rape myths as a short-cut processing strategy in response to limited cognitive capacity (Bodenhausen & Lichtenstein, 1987; Macrae et al., 1993). In contrast with the predicted effect that participants in the high cognitive and high affective load groups would be less likely to perceive a forced sex scenario as rape compared with the low cognitive load participants, there were no significant differences as to whether the scenario was perceived as a rape situation between the three groups. On the other hand, the control condition participants clearly did not perceive the mutually consenting scenario to be rape as was expected, providing support for the distinctiveness of the two types of scenarios presented in the study.

Attributions of responsibility for rape

The cognitive manipulations for condition did not support the predictions for responsibility for rape, or encouragement of sexual behaviour by the female actor across conditions. Specifically, participants in the high cognitive and high affective load groups were no more likely to perceive the female actor as responsible for rape or having encouraged the sexual incident more than participants in the low cognitive load. The only significant difference between condition and attribution of responsibility for rape was for the participants in the high affective load condition who perceived the female actor to be less responsible for the forced sex encounter, compared with participants in the control condition who evaluated responsibility of the male and female actor for a consensual situation. Control condition participants showed no differences in the amount of responsibility attributed to either the male and female in the consenting sex scenario. Although contrary to the prediction that the

female would be more likely to be held responsible for a forced sex incident than the male, it is a favourable result from a social attitudes perspective that participants perceived the male in story to be more responsible overall for the forced sex encounter than the female.

Additionally, the more the scenario was perceived as rape, the less participants across the three conditions that presented a date rape scenario believed that the female actor had encouraged the sexual incident. However, no differences were found between the groups to support the prediction that participants in the high cognitive and high affective load groups would rate the female actor as having encouraged the sexual incident more than participants with no cognitive load.

Psychological impact

The cognitive manipulations for condition also did not support the predictions for the estimated severity of the psychological impact on the female actor across conditions. Specifically, participants in the high cognitive load and high affective load did not perceive the psychological impact on the female victim as more severe than participants in the low cognitive load. Participants in the control condition, however, did not believe that the female actor experienced a severe psychological impact as a result of willingly engaging in intercourse, which supported the prediction that participants would view the consenting sex scenario differently to the forced sex scenario. Additionally, the more the scenario was perceived as rape by participants in the experimental groups only, the higher the estimated ratings for the severity of the psychological impact on the female actor.

Positivity of feelings

Participants in the three date rape conditions felt more positive towards the female actor than the male actor. As with the above finding that participants perceived the male in story to be more responsible overall for the forced sex encounter than the female, this has positive implications in the way male and female participants perceived the forced sex scenario. This is also supported by the fact that control group participants showed approximately equal positive feelings towards the male and female actor in response to a mutually consenting sexual encounter.

The motivated tactician

It is clear that participants in the high cognitive loads were no more likely to endorse rape myths and show rape supportive attitudes than participants in the comparable low cognitive load. Although the cognitive manipulations produced little effect overall in terms of supporting the predictions, participants may have been motivated to process the information presented in a more socially desirable manner. Date rape is a topic which has negative social connotations, and it is possible that most participants were aware of this from the material presented in the scenario, and hence avoided responses which might be subject to social disapproval. Recalling the motivational and cognitive arguments which presented different perspectives on information processing whilst under an induced positive mood state (see Introduction pg. 30 - 31), the findings in the present study did not support either argument. Although participants in the high affective load experienced an increase in positive affect (excitement and arousal), this did not result in an increase in the use of rape supportive attitudes and stereotypes to support the motivational argument. Similarly, the reduction in cognitive capacity as a result of an

increase in positive affect also did not result in an increase of rape supportive stereotypes to support the cognitive argument. The reduction of cognitive capacity whilst processing an eight digit number for the high cognitive load participants also did not result in an increase in rape myth acceptance and justification for date rape.

However, there is evidence to suggest that perceivers can avoid relying on stereotypes when their processing goals are inconsistent with stereotype usage (Bodenhausen, Kramer, & Susser, 1994). This finding is consistent with Fiske and Taylor's (1991) theory of the social perceiver being motivated to allocate processing resources according to the current dominant processing goals. To avoid stereotypic responses, perceivers must be motivated to process information in a more thorough manner consistent with these goals. Thus, if observers were motivated to process their responses related to their perception of date rape, and indicate their level of acceptance of rape myths in a socially acceptable manner, it is possible that participants elected to process the information in a more effortful manner that eliminated stereotype usage. This theory is consistent with Fiske and Taylor's (1991) view of the perceiver as a 'motivated tactician', who contended that perceivers were flexible in choosing how to allocate cognitive resources depending on their processing goals. For further discussion of this issue, see the section below which considers how future research might address this issue.

Some of the limitations inherent in the present study which may have influenced the results found are discussed below. Before considering the present study's findings in light of its limitations, the discussion will explore the possibility that the same experimental manipulations would be more effective if it targeted a sex offender population.

SOCIAL COGNITION AND SEXUAL OFFENDING

It is possible that the high cognitive and high affective load manipulations in the present study, and high load in general may be more effective on some people (such as offenders) more than others. The fundamental assumption made towards participants in the present study derived from the literature review was that people's underlying attitudes and beliefs towards date rape would reveal adherence to a number of commonly accepted myths about rape. However, and as the results seem to suggest, it is possible that participants in the present sample held more anti-rape attitudes than was predicted.

It will be recalled from the stereotype literature that stereotypes guide information processing once activated, leading to selective attention and memory for stereotype consistent information (Bodenhausen, 1988). Thus, decisions and judgements are made in a stereotype consistent manner, which in turn leads to the maintenance of biased beliefs. This explanation is consistent with Johnston and Ward's (1996) discussion regarding the cognitive processes involved in sexual offending. Johnston and Ward pointed out the similarity between high cognitive load conditions in the stereotype literature, and high-risk situations that increase the likelihood of sexual offending, such as negative affect as a result of stress. Sexual offending is more likely to occur when there are high cognitive demands, and in high affective states (Pithers, 1990). Hence, rapists who have shown higher rape myth acceptance scores than males from the general population (Malamuth, 1981), are more likely to hold stronger pro-rape attitudes than participants in this study, and thus show more rape supportive beliefs under conditions which deplete cognitive capacity.

LIMITATIONS OF CURRENT RESEARCH

There are some limitations in the present study that need addressing. Firstly, the present sample was comprised of a small selection of students who were willing to volunteer their time. A larger sample size among the general population may have yielded stronger effects between experimental condition and sex. The present study also has limited generalisability to populations that are non-caucasian, or are heterosexual.

Another issue which may have influenced the results in light of the sensitive nature of the topic under investigation, are potential priming effects. It is possible that the scenario that described a couple involved in a forced sex incident may have alerted participants that the study was investigating a negative social situation, which was probably confirmed by the presentation of the final question of the Sexual Behaviour Questionnaire (perception of rape), presented separately. Fiske and Taylor's (1991) theory of the motivated tactician sheds some light on understanding how participants' may have been motivated to process the information more thoroughly to avoid responding in a manner which may elicit social disapproval. It is difficult to gauge whether participants' were responding in line with their true beliefs, or what they thought they should believe. Future research in this area should bear in mind the potential for social desirability effects to occur and seek ways to minimise its effects, such as including items on a Likert scale that measures the accuracy of participants' responses.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Recalling the findings from the Anderson et al., (1997) meta-analysis of rape attitudes that young, more highly educated individuals showed less acceptance of rape myths, it could be predicted that a sample that was more representative in terms of age and education level among respondents would reveal higher acceptance of rape myths and more rape supportive attitudes in general. The research in this area needs extending as it has not been widely tested. Additionally, it would be interesting to contrast the results from a wider population with the present study. A further extension from this could be to target a representative sample of senior high school students.

Additionally, as discussed above, a specific target population of sex offenders who have committed rape may yield stronger effects for the cognitive manipulations due to the likelihood that offenders would reveal much stronger pro-rape beliefs under high load than participants in the present study.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study was guided by two primary goals. Firstly, it sought to investigate whether people would correctly interpret a forced sex situation in the context of a typical dating scenario as rape. The second main objective was to investigate the conditions that might influence the degree people endorsed rape myths. High acceptance of myths have been shown to influence the way people think about rape, and how they treat survivors of a crime of a most serious nature. Rape has severe emotional and psychological consequences for women, particularly where they may

face the added trauma of being blamed for their own victimisation. Current research suggested a high prevalence of sexual victimisation occurring within legitimate heterosexual relationships that remains unacknowledged and therefore undetected. The implications from the present study seem to suggest however, that males and females are more aware of the connotations of forced sexual intercourse against a woman's will than the literature under review predicted. Although the current study found no support for the majority of its predictions, overall it can be seen as a positive result in terms of its reflection upon a sample of students from the University of Canterbury, who not only clearly identified a forced sex scenario as rape, but also believed the man who forced his partner to have sex was more responsible. Furthermore, if in the course of this research people have become more informed about the facts of rape, then this would have gone some way to dispel the myths that maintain false beliefs about rape and perpetuate rape supportive stereotypes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

The Date

Jim walked up to the door at Diane's place and knocked. Her flatmate Suzie answered, and she told Jim to wait in the lounge as Diane would be ready in a minute. He told Suzie they were going to spend the evening at the movies. While she went to tell Diane her date had arrived. Jim checked himself in the hall mirror. His 5-foot-10 inch, 76-kilo frame fit well into the denim shirt and jeans he had donned. Diane walked down the hall and over to Jim. Jim smiled and said he really liked the blue satin dress she had bought last week. She was only 5-foot-2-inches, 47 kilos, small in relation to Jim.

As they walked outside to the car, Diane said she'd wanted to see "Independence Day" for a long time. As they drove to the cinema they talked about their mutual friends and the party last weekend. Diane and Jim were both studying Psychology and were in the same class and lab streams. They had met at the beginning of the year, two months earlier and had seen each other a couple of times at first, and then every weekend for the past month. They continue to date others on occasion.

After parking the car, the couple waited in line, making small talk until they reached the ticket window. Jim bought the tickets and they went inside. They were spellbound by the movie; neither talked until the film was over. After the movie, Jim suggested that they go back to his place where they could listen to music, have a couple of drinks, and talk. Diane said "okay."

When they got to his flat, Jim put on a CD and asked Diane what she would like to drink. After he had poured drinks for both of them, they sat on the couch for a while, listening to music and talking. As they were talking, their eyes would meet and then both would quickly look away. The fourth time their eyes made contact, Diane and Jim held their gaze and smiled. Jim moved closer to Diane, put his arm around her and gently stroked her shoulder. He kissed her softly.

Jim put both arms around Diane and held her close to him. He kissed her again, longer this time, and then opened his mouth slightly so that his tongue touched hers. He continued to kiss her like this for a while.

Jim slid his hand inside Diane's dress and began to fondle her breast; with the other hand he started unbuttoning the dress. Soon, Jim managed to finish unbuttoning Diane's dress and he slipped it off her shoulders. Kissing her so that their mouths were in continuous contact, he stroked her breasts rhythmically and then rubbed the inside of her thighs. Jim kissed Diane's breasts and stomach and touched her genital area. Then he slid her dress completely off and removed her underwear. They kissed each other passionately.

Version D

With Diane totally naked, Jim leaned against her and pushed her back onto the couch until he was on top of her. Diane said, "No, Jim, don't." Ignoring this, Jim responded "It's okay," and quickly unzipped his pants and slid them down. Diane struggled and said, "I don't want to, let me go!" "Relax Diane, don't worry," Jim answered.

Diane protested once more, "Don't! Stop!" Jim held Diane and said, "Don't worry, everything's fine." He stroked her breasts, "Relax, just take it easy, I know what you want," he said. Jim continued to kiss and fondle Diane. Soon, he penetrated her and intercourse occurred.

Version C

With Diane totally naked, Jim leaned against her and pushed her back onto the couch until he was on top of her. Diane said, "Yes, Jim, don't stop." Jim responded with "okay," and quickly unzipped his pants and slid them down. Diane moved under Jim and said "I want you, don't let me go!" "Relax Diane, don't worry," Jim answered.

Diane murmured once more, "Don't stop." Jim held Diane closer and said "Don't worry, everything's fine." He stroked her breasts, "Relax, just take it easy, I know what you want," he said. Jim continued to kiss and fondle Diane. Soon, he penetrated her and intercourse occurred.

Code No: _____ Date _____

RMAS

Directions: For the statements which follow, please circle the number that best indicates your opinion - what you believe. If you strongly disagree you would answer '1'; if you strongly agree you would answer '7'; if you feel neutral you would answer '4'; and so on.

Disagree Strongly 1	Disagree Somewhat 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Neutral 4	Agree Slightly 5	Agree Somewhat 6	Agree Strongly 7
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- | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|) A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|) Any female can get raped. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|) One reason that women falsely report a rape is that they frequently have a need to call attention to themselves. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|) Any healthy women can successfully resist a rapist if she really wants to. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|) When women go around braless or wearing short skirts or tight tops, they are just asking for trouble. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|) Women who get raped while hitchhiking get what they deserve. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|) A woman who is stuck-up and thinks she is too good to talk to guys on the street deserves to be taught a lesson. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|) Many women have an <u>unconscious</u> wish to be raped, and may then <u>unconsciously</u> set up a situation in which they are likely to be attacked. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|) If a women gets drunk at a party and has intercourse with a man she's just met there, she should be considered 'fair game' to other males at the party who want to have sex with her too, whether she wants to or not. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|) In the majority of rapes, the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|) If a girl engages in necking or petting and she lets things get out of hand, it is her own fault if her partner forces sex on her. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Please use the following scale to answer the next two questions.

Almost None 1	A Few 2	Some 3	About Half 4	Many 5	A Lot 6	Almost All 7
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- 2) What percentage of women who report a rape would you say are lying because they are angry and want to get back at the man they accuse? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 3) What percentage of reported rapes would you guess were merely invented by women who discovered they were pregnant and wanted to protect their own reputation? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Please use the following scale to answer the remaining six questions.

Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Half the time 4	Often 5	Usually 6	Always 7
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A person comes to you and claims they were raped. How likely would you be to believe their statement if the person were:

- 14) Your best friend? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 15) A neighbourhood woman? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 16) A Maori woman? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 17) A young boy? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 18) A Polynesian woman? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 19) A European woman? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. To what extent would you describe the incident as rape?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all						very much

Appendix C

Social Perception and Sexual Behaviour in Dating Relationships

The following questionnaire is designed to measure your opinion towards sexual behaviour in male and female relationships. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential, and no identifying information will be collected. You may at any time withdraw your participation, including withdrawal of any information you have provided.

By completing the questionnaire, however, it will be understood that you have consented to participate in the project, and that you consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved.

Code No: _____ Date _____

RMAS

Directions: For the statements which follow, please circle the number that best indicates your opinion - what you believe. If you strongly disagree you would answer '1'; if you strongly agree you would answer '7'; if you feel neutral you would answer '4'; and so on.

Disagree Strongly 1	Disagree Somewhat 2	Disagree Slightly 3	Neutral 4	Agree Slightly 5	Agree Somewhat 6	Agree Strongly 7
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A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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Any female can get raped.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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One reason that women falsely report a rape is that they frequently have a need to call attention to themselves.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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Any healthy women can successfully resist a rapist if she really wants to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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When women go around braless or wearing short skirts or tight tops, they are just asking for trouble.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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Women who get raped while hitchhiking get what they deserve.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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A woman who is stuck-up and thinks she is too good to talk to guys on the street deserves to be taught a lesson.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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Many women have an <u>unconscious</u> wish to be raped, and may then <u>unconsciously</u> set up a situation in which they are likely to be attacked.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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If a women gets drunk at a party and has intercourse with a man she's just met there, she should be considered 'fair game' to other males at the party who want to have sex with her too, whether she wants to or not.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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In the majority of rapes, the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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If a girl engages in necking or petting and she lets things get out of hand, it is her own fault if her partner forces sex on her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Please use the following scale to answer the next two questions.

Almost None 1	A Few 2	Some 3	About Half 4	Many 5	A Lot 6	Almost All 7
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- 2) What percentage of women who report a rape would you say are lying because they are angry and want to get back at the man they accuse?

1234567
- 3) What percentage of reported rapes would you guess were merely invented by women who discovered they were pregnant and wanted to protect their own reputation?

1234567

Please use the following scale to answer the remaining six questions.

Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Half the time 4	Often 5	Usually 6	Always 7
------------	-------------	----------------	--------------------	------------	--------------	-------------

person comes to you and claims they were raped. How likely would you be to believe their statement if the person were:

- 14) Your best friend?

1234567
- 15) A neighbourhood woman?

1234567
- 16) A Maori woman?

1234567
- 17) A young boy?

1234567
- 18) A Polynesian woman?

1234567
- 19) A European woman?

1234567

Appendix D

Please write in as much detail as you can about a sexual experience that was exciting for you, preferably within the last six months. Try to include details such as the location, the events that took place immediately leading up to the encounter, how your partner looked; and how he / she felt. This exercise is strictly confidential, and the details will only be seen by you. When you have finished, please answer the three questions below.

1. How excited do you feel?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all excited						very excited

2. How aroused do you feel?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all aroused						very aroused

3. Please circle the character below that best describes how happy you feel:-

						
very happy	somewhat happy	slightly happy	neither happy nor unhappy	slightly unhappy	somewhat unhappy	very unhappy

Appendix E

University of Canterbury Department of Psychology

Social Perception and Sexual Behaviour in Dating Relationships

Research Information

I am currently investigating information processing in male and female dating relationships, which you are invited to participate in.

The study is in two parts; the first asks you to read a short vignette describing a couple on a date which is followed by some questions about the events that occur. The second part asks you to give your prevailing opinion towards sexual behaviour in male and female relationships by answering a general questionnaire. In addition to this, participants will be required to give general background information to enable collection of demographic data. Your involvement is estimated to take twenty minutes.

The results of the study may be published, but confidential information supplied by you will not be made public without your consent. By completing the task, it is understood that you have given your consent to participate in the survey, and that you consent to publication of the results with the guarantee that complete anonymity will be preserved. To ensure anonymity, please do not write your name on the answer sheet or questionnaires. You are entitled to withdraw from the study at any time, including the withdrawal of information provided.

This project is being carried out by Debbie McFadyen, and I will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in the project. I can be contacted by phoning 355-4889 after hours.

A lucky dip containing one mystery envelope with \$50 cash and \$1 Instant Kiwi tickets will be offered to all participants.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Research Ethics Committee.

University of Canterbury

Department of Psychology

Social Perception and Sexual Behaviour in Dating Relationships

Research Information

I am currently investigating information processing in male and female dating relationships, which you are invited to participate in.

The study is in three parts; the first asks you to memorise an eight digit number to be recalled following the third and final part of the study. The second part asks you to read a short vignette describing a couple on a date which is followed by some questions about the events that occur. The third part asks you to give your prevailing opinion towards sexual behaviour in male and female relationships by answering a general questionnaire. In addition to this, participants will be required to give general background information to enable collection of demographic data. Your involvement is estimated to take twenty minutes.

The results of the study may be published, but confidential information supplied by you will not be made public without your consent. By completing the task, it is understood that you have given your consent to participate in the survey, and that you consent to publication of the results with the guarantee that complete anonymity will be preserved. To ensure anonymity, please do not write your name on the answer sheet or questionnaires. You are entitled to withdraw from the study at any time, including the withdrawal of information provided.

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University of Canterbury

Department of Psychology

Social Perception and Sexual Behaviour in Dating Relationships

Research Information

I am currently investigating information processing in male and female dating relationships, which you are invited to participate in.

The study is in three parts; the first asks you to write for 10 - 15 mins about a personal sexual experience you found particularly exciting. This will remain confidential as the details will not be reported in any part of this research, and will be returned to you following completion of the third and final part of the study. The second part asks you to read a short vignette describing a couple on a date which is followed by some questions about the events that occur. The third part asks you to give your prevailing opinion towards sexual behaviour in male and female relationships by answering a general questionnaire. In addition to this, participants will be required to give general background information to enable collection of demographic data. In total, your involvement is estimated to take twenty minutes.

The results of the study may be published, but confidential information supplied by you will not be made public without your consent. By completing the task, it is understood that you have given your consent to participate in the survey, and that you consent to publication of the results with the guarantee that complete anonymity will be preserved. To ensure anonymity, please do not write your name on the answer sheet or questionnaires. You are entitled to withdraw from the study at any time, including the withdrawal of information provided.

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Appendix F

About the Study...

Recently, Ms. magazine in conjunction with psychologist Mary P. Koss (1988), undertook a widespread scientific survey of date rape on 32 college campuses in the States. Findings showed that 1 in 4 women surveyed were victims of rape or attempted rape; 84 percent of those raped reported knowing their attacker; and 54 percent of the rapes happened on dates.

A recent survey of Auckland University undergraduate students reported that 52% of 347 women revealed that they had experienced some form of unwanted sexual contact such as kissing or touching, and 25% had either been raped, or experienced attempted rape (Gavey, 1991). Nearly two-thirds of all incidents of victimisation were reported by women as being perpetrated by their boyfriend, lover, husband or de-facto partner. Prevalence data from the United States comparable with the New Zealand study shows similarly high levels of sexual victimisation experienced by women, by people they know (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987).

These studies have highlighted the high proportion of all sexual victimisation that is being perpetrated under the guise of legitimate heterosexual relationships. Additionally, the statistics they present challenge a number of widely believed rape myths, where rape is not seen the same as unwanted sex. Research findings from a wide variety of studies report that most people perceive rapists as deranged strangers who lie in wait for their female victims in dark places. Unfortunately, the risk of being raped by someone known is four times greater than the risk of being raped by a stranger (Koss, 1988).

Date rape can be defined as an interaction that begins between two people at a social event or gathering and ends with one participant forcing and/or coercing the other to participate in sexual activity (Sawyer, Desmond & Lucke, 1993). This includes behaviours such as ignoring protests indicating that intimacy is not mutual, threatening negative consequences or use of force, or using force to obtain sexual intimacy.

The story you have just read and evaluated about the events that took place during Diane's date with Jim describes a typical example of date rape. Your responses to questions about the date were intended to measure your perception of the amount of responsibility attributed to Diane for the outcome. A general questionnaire measured your response to a number of stereotypical beliefs about rape which included common rape myths such as:-

'Only bad girls get raped'

'Any healthy woman can resist a rapist if she really wants to'

'Women asked to be raped'

'Women often cry rape'

'Rapists are sex-starved, insane or both'

'Women often say no when they really mean yes'

Rape myths such as the ones cited above serve the purpose of placing the blame back onto the victim. Rape supportive attitudes and beliefs promote the idea that men are not to be held responsible for their own sexual behaviour, and that women can be held accountable for failing to exercise adequate control over a situation that may lead to forced sex. Men and women have been found to differ in their attitudes towards the seriousness of date rape and attributions of victim responsibility, with women attributing more seriousness to the offence, and less responsibility towards the victim than men in general. However, previous research has shown that correctly labelling forced sex as rape when a female victim was presented as being coerced by her partner was difficult to make, not just for males but for females as well (Klemmack & Klemmack, 1976).

This study has two main goals. Firstly, it aims to measure gender differences (if any) in correctly identifying a situation of a forced sexual encounter as rape. Investigation of the conditions that may increase the likelihood of people using stereotypes is the second aim. Research from the domain of cognitive psychology suggests that under conditions of limited processing capacity, people make inferences and use processing short cuts. One type of short cut is the use of stereotypes (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). In this way, people can provide answers and solve problems in a simple and quick fashion, without overloading their cognitive capacity.

In order to study these effects, participants were randomly assigned into one of four groups. Participants in Group 1 were asked to answer the responsibility for outcome questionnaire after reading the scenario describing Jim and Diane's date, followed by the rape myths questionnaire. Group 2 participants were asked to remember an eight digit number shown to them at the beginning of the study in order to limit cognitive processing when reading and evaluating the outcome of the date. These participants were told they must recall the number at the conclusion of the rape myths questionnaire to ensure they had less cognitive processing capacity available than the other three groups during the study.

Group 3 respondents were asked to write about an exciting sexual encounter they had personally experienced prior to reading and evaluating the date in order to compare a positive mood state and attributions of responsibility for the forced sexual encounter experienced by Diane, and willingness to accept rape myths. A fourth group provided control data by responding to a different version of Jim and Diane's date. The final two paragraphs were changed from a forced sex scenario to a mutually consenting encounter between Jim and Diane. Responses to the victim responsibility and rape myths questionnaires will be compared to obtain differences in perception (if any) between the experimental groups.

This study deals with a sensitive topic that some may find disturbing. Free advice and counselling services from trained professionals are available for students who have any concerns raised by this research. Names of contact agencies and their phone numbers are listed below. In addition, I am happy to discuss any aspect of this study in the future. For further information phone Debbie McFadyen, 355-4889 (a.h.), or 025 366-985 during business hours. Alternatively, leave a message with Robyn in the Psychology Department on 3642-971.

CONTACT NUMBERS:

Rape and Incest Survivors ph: 364-7324

Sexual Health Centre ph: 364-0485

Stop Programme ph: 379-5950

(Treatment programme to stop sexually abusive behaviour)